

Summary of the women of the mountain's roundtable at UVU

On October 2nd 2017, the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a student clubs coalition at Utah Valley University (UVU) hosted five representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The topic up for discussion during the roundtable was “Joint Advocacy of Mountain Women and Agenda at the United Nations”. Those discussing the subject were Dr. Baldomero Lago; Dr. Jed Shilling; Dr. Andrew Taber; Dr. Rusty Butler; and lastly, Mrs. Wendy Jyang.



Roundtable participants discuss mountain women advocacy at the UN

The introducing speaker was Dr. Baldomero Lago, who is the CIO and Vice-Rector for Global Engagement at UVU. He discussed future plans regarding the United Nations (UN) and how UVU and the Mountain institute will benefit from these activities. He then discussed his recent trip to New York City where he took the necessary paperwork to the UN to make UVU an associate member of the United Nations Department of Public Information. He explained that UVU is the only school in the state to be given this honorable position.

The second speaker was Dr. Jed Shilling, who is on the Board of Trustees at The Mountain Institute (TMI) based out of Washington DC. Dr. Shilling gave a presentation to the audience on the importance of the mountains for communities as well as the importance of the mountain women. He stated that a lot of states do not give enough importance to mountain issues

as well as water allocation even though these states depend on the run-off water. It was stated that we need to protect mountains in order to protect water streams. He was very passionate on this subject as his wife, Dr. Jane Pratt was the founder of TMI.

Following Dr. Shilling, Dr. Andrew Taber, the executive director of TMI, reinforced that the need for international assistance is essential in order to help the mountain environment and women of the mountains as these are two things that are often left behind in development. His main focus was on the communities surrounding the mountains, and how to help improve their lives. One idea discussed during the roundtable was to build better roads in the community without harming the environment, as the current roads turn into landslides during the rainy season.

Dr. Rusty Butler, who is the main representative at the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, described the academy's history and the partnership it has with UVU. Dr. Butler discussed how UVU is the first university of Utah to put students on an UN level with focus on mountain issues. He mentioned how the 4th International Women of the Mountains conference was hosted by students as engaged learning initiative, and was pleasantly surprised at the effort the students gave and how much of a success the conference turned out to be.

The concluding speaker for the roundtable was Ms. Wendy Jyang. She founded Beijing-based Liahona International Services to provide the opportunity for people to travel to Asia to provide humanitarian services. She focused on the importance of finding out what we are passionate about, and to act on it. We need to get involved in our communities and in the world in order to make a difference and to reach our personal goals. I learned a lot about the needs the women of the mountains have, and how we need to come together in order to help them. It was a very inspiring event put on by the university.

Evelyn Alpizar, UVU student

