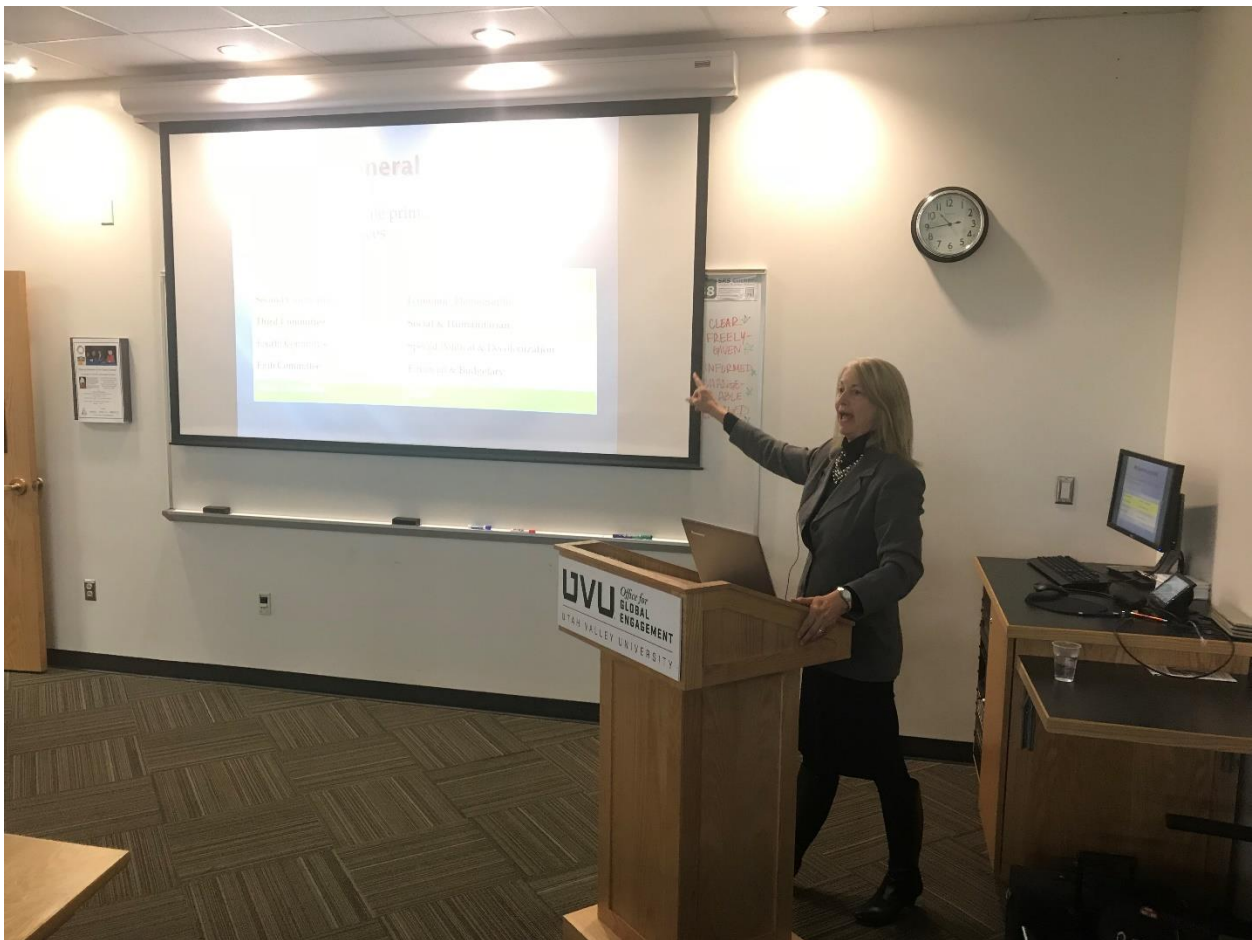


Marcia Barlow and the UVU Delegation to the United Nations

On March 3rd 2018 I was privileged to participate in an all-day workshop presented by Marcia Barlow, Vice President of United Families International. Marcia's visit was arranged by members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (www.utahimf.org), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University in preparation for our upcoming presentation at the United Nations. Marcia has twenty years of experience attending and participating in UN conferences and commissions. Because UVU, in collaboration with UIMF, is taking a student/faculty delegation to the 62nd Commission on the Status of Women at the UN, delegation members were eager to enlist her help in our preparation. UIMF members raised funds, arranged the agenda and addressed all logistical concerns for Marcia's workshop titled "How to Advocate at the United Nations."



Marcia Barlow during presentation before UVU delegation members

As part of the delegation presenting at the UN this month, I am both excited and nervous. The overall focus of our presentation will be UVU's engaged model of learning and how this model can be used to create a platform for empowerment for women and men around the globe. I

am one of a handful of students who will present small vignettes about our experience with engaged learning at UVU. During my presentation, I will speak about a research project I have been working on with Dr. Debjani Chakravarty on the intersections of sexuality/gender identity and religion in Utah. I will then talk about my upcoming Summer research project where I will travel to Northern Ireland to interview women who were involved in peacebuilding efforts in the 90's.



*Marcia Barlow (the third from the left in the second row) with UVU delegation members after lunch.
Monica English is at the center in the first row*

Because I have never been to the United Nations or presented at a national or international venue, I was eager to hear from someone who is well versed in these types of forums. In our first session Marcia gave us information on the basics of UN commissions. She talked us through the different people we would meet, how to cut down on our time standing in security lines and the unique language of United Nations documents. Some of the things she talked about were practical: Where would one find a schedule of the presentations? What is the difference between a badge

with a D and a badge with an S? What is the difference between a side event and a parallel event? Some of it was strategic: How do I get a meeting with a diplomat? Where can I pass out written material?

Following the morning workshop, we gathered for lunch and then had an afternoon session in which Marcia kindly looked over our presentation materials and gave input on changes we should make to have the most impact during our time at the UN. She suggested being strategic in the sessions we attend and a time of debriefing at the end of the day with our whole team.

When the day was over and we all went our separate ways, I realized how much more prepared I felt for our upcoming UN experience. I am looking forward to the culmination of all of our hard work when we present in just over two weeks.

Monica English, UVU student