

## Visit of Ambassador Mahmaminov to Utah Valley University



**Ambassador Mahmaminov during meeting with UVU Students**

Utah Valley University (UVU) and Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU had an honor of hosting the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan, Ambassador Mahmaminov on October 5, 2018. When Ambassador Mahmaminov began his lecture, he depicted the characteristics and traits of Utah that resembled Tajikistan. He described landing at the Salt Lake International Airport as though he was landing in his home country. He then proceeded to present the geography of his country and how it is a similar mountainous country in the heart of Central Asia. In mountainous regions, that Tajikistan has, there are approximately 1400 lakes that bear the resources to sustain agriculture in the country. Agriculture accounts for a large percentage of the workforce and economy of the country. The country also harvest energy from the water, as well as supply neighboring countries with their surplus of water. Due to that, the water initiative of Tajikistan at the United Nations was supported unanimously in order to secure water sustainability globally.

As a secretary of the UIMF and Foreign Affairs clubs co-hosting Mahmadamin Mahmadaminov I was intrigued to better understand the situations in Central Asia. It is based on a global intercultural experience, which is profoundly similar to our own surroundings in Utah. Other than the similarities in geography, Utah and Tajikistan have a similarity as very hospitable communities, as Ambassador told us which was way that he felt at home in Utah.

The Ambassador Mahmadaminov talked about the steps that Tajikistan has taken to get to that state of development where they are today. For instance, they have brought the 80% poverty rate down to 29%. Tajikistan has also suffered a drug trafficking problem while being in the same vicinity as Afghanistan. The Ambassador believes that the best way to resolve this problems with Tajikistan, is to help Afghanistan with the development of a system of sustainable economic development. Ambassador Mahmadamin Mahmadaminov was proud to present on behalf of Tajikistan with its devotion to the water problems, similar initiative that was voted in by the United Nations. Tajikistan only uses 5% of the water that comes from its mountainous regions. The initiative uses the water for sustainable development in surrounding countries. The water produces hydropower and contributes to the agriculture that makes up a large portion of their economy. The surplus water is then passed over to bordering countries of the landlocked Tajikistan. The water then is used to help those countries and develop a system of sustainable economy and agriculture.

The hosting of Ambassador Mahmadamin Mahmadaminov was a valuable learning experience for me and my peers, members of UIMF about global culture of mountainous countries.

*Kyle Williams, member, UIMF*