

My contribution to the ninth International Mountain Day Celebration at UVU

At the International Mountain Day (IMD) Celebration at Utah Valley University (UVU) on December 5, 2018, I had the opportunity to take pictures of the speakers, and of Megan Davis handing certificates to all the people who have been involved with the Utah International Mountain Forum, (UIMF) in any way this past semester. The UIMF is a coalition of clubs here at UVU. Working alongside the UVU Office for Global Engagement, UIMF members have put on several events this semester to bring awareness to the Sustainable Development Goals, or the SDGs and the Sustainable Mountain Development in particular. At the IMD celebration, we heard from several speakers very close to the topic sustainability.



Sam Elzinga speaks during 2018 IMD at UVU

Sam Elzinga, the President of UIMF, talked about why mountains matter. Sam has worked very hard with the UIMF and their take on the SDGs, he even received a personal invite from Permanent mission of Kyrgyzstan at the United Nations (UN) to attend the International Mountain Day event in New York on December the 11th.

Following Sam, Dr. Baldomero Lago, the Vice Rector for Global Engagement, spoke about the influence that the Office for Global Engagement, and the UIMF has had on an international level. UVU has been noticed by members of the UN, and will be helped to host a UN conference next year in Salt Lake City, outside of the Blue Zone of which hundreds of participants from around the globe will plan to attend.

Then the Mayor of the City of Orem, Richard Brunst, spoke about his love and passion for the mountains here in Utah. He talked about the original pioneer settlers that came to Utah and found the safety and peace the mountains provided. He said that is a feeling that has been passed on and still is found in the residents here, and the SDGs are very important because they will allow the safety and peace to continue for generations to come.

The audience also heard from Dr. Ross Butler, Mrs. Wendy Jyang, and Ms. Rebecca Bindraban, who are all involved in partnerships with UIMF and work very hard on shaping the future generations and their involvement in the SDGs. Dr. Butler has been the main representative at the UN for the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences. Through Ms. Jyang's programs youth in impoverished countries receive education and English lessons from students around the world. Ms. Bindraban is UVU student and the Editor-In-Chief of the Youth and the Mountains Journal, which highlights student's work on sustainable development topics.

I am very lucky to be a part of this coalition of clubs because of the opportunity to hear and learn from these fellow students of mine who take full advantage of the student engagement opportunities that UVU offers. Our generation needs to start making changes if we want to have a positive impact on this planet, and the SDGs are put into place to ignite those changes. Educating ourselves, and then going on to educate others is how we start the chain reaction that will result in that change. Through taking pictures I can share the message of the SDGs, and with this unique opportunity I get to help showcase our events in a very professional and sometimes personal way. It helps us to remember the things we saw and heard that day, and then to go forward and share. I am grateful for this opportunity that UVU and the UIMF provide, and I am excited for the opportunities to come.

Hailee Hodgson, UIMF member