

Reflections on UIMF Lunch and Dinner Meetings with Dr. Richard Jordan

On April 9, 2019, members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU), had a great opportunity to have lunch with Dr. Richard Jordan, who was visiting UVU to advise UIMF on how UVU's student engaged learning model can be used to contribute to the upcoming United Nations (UN) Civil Society Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, on August 26-28, 2019. Dr. Jordan also came to instruct UIMF on how best to advocate for SMD and mountain women and girls at the UN level, and to present UVU with his library of UN resources to create a UN Depository Library at UVU, which would constitute Utah's second such library.



UIMF members during lunch with Mr. Jordan

The lunch was attended by Sam Elzinga, UIMF President, such UIMF members as Viktoriia Bahrii, William Gum-Causey, Ezra Pugliano, and myself, along with UIMF faculty mentor Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, Department of History and Political Science administrative assistant Kimberly Williamson, and Joel Frost, President of the Foreign Affairs club and the main host of the guest. The lunch was both a reunion for students who were part of a delegation advocating for mountain women and girls at the 63rd Session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) this past March, as well as an additional opportunity to learn more

from Dr. Jordan about the UN system and best practices for UN-level advocacy. During the lunch, Dr. Jordan told a number of stories related to his daily participation at meetings, conferences, and informal conversations with civil society members and UN diplomats at UN Headquarters; Dr. Jordan again stressed the importance of making friends with such people, and how his personal connections led him to holding leadership positions and making important contributions to UN events on sustainability.



(L to R): Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, Michael Hinatsu and Mr. Richard Jordan during dinner

In the evening, I had the opportunity to accompany Dr. Jordan and Dr. Abdrisaev to dinner, where we further discussed best advocacy practices in the context of the upcoming UN Civil Society Conference and UIMF's mission. I learned many important things from Dr. Jordan about how UIMF and UVU students in general are in the unique position of being at the forefront of academia in advocating at the UN level for issues surrounding the UN 2030 Development agenda. Dr. Jordan had a wealth of suggestions for how UIMF should contribute to the planning and implementation of the UN Civil Society Conference, stressing the importance of students focusing on engaging with conference participants as it relates to mountain women advocacy and how Utah is one of the best examples on sustainable mountain development.

Dr. Jordan also shared with me important information about high level segments under the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and how UIMF can best contribute to ECOSOC forums

such as the 2019 High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development and CSW64 in 2020. Furthermore, Dr. Jordan gave a number of recommendations about certain Permanent Representatives of ECOSOC member states to invite to UVU, so that UIMF can more effectively create coalitions with ECOSOC and its leadership to ensure that mountain women and girls will be mentioned in relevant ECOSOC forum final documents.

Overall, I am thankful to UIMF leadership for making Dr. Jordan's visit to UVU possible. I am also very thankful to Dr. Jordan for his timely and detailed advice on the above topics, as it has helped me learn both how the UN system works and how UIMF can work in that system in a meaningful way.

Michael Hinatsu, UIMF Vice President