

Celebrating Utah Mountain Nature and Life



President of Utah International Mountain Forum, Samuel Elzinga speaks during the IMD event

Utah Valley University (UVU) has contributed to the great success of the Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at UVU. The State of Utah is filled with beautiful Mountains and UVU is right in the heart of a vast mountainous region. As I had the opportunity to participate in the International Mountain Day (IMD) observation on December 2, 2019 at UVU, there were various things that caught my attention. Growing up in the state of Utah I never considered the Mountains to be a part of my culture. A person could not leave the IMD event without considering the impact that Mountains have on an individual.

Students are a large contributor to the continuation and success of the Utah International Mountain Forum. Many students were awarded for their contribution to the organization. With the students successes came excellent mentors. These are professors at UVU who have successfully

created and sustained the organization here in Utah. Many hours of service were given by both student and faculty which is creating relationships within the State, Country and internationally.

UVU has been a large contributor to the United Nations conferences. UVU has brought the 68th UN Civil Society Conference to the state of Utah last August which has been extremely successful. The audience of the event has doubled and will continue to increase. The purpose of the IMD is not to gain political power, but the purpose is to educate and create awareness. The conference has led to strong relationships with other mountainous countries. Relationships have been made with people all throughout the world to preserve, maintain and spread the culture and life of mountain people.

The entire purpose of the Utah International Mountain Forum is to: raise awareness of Mountain sustainability topics especially for Utah. To bring the public into contact with international guests and foreign dignitaries. Lastly, to bring communities together to recognize their shared mountain heritage. This is being done right here at UVU. Professors such as Dr. Butler have been working with the Russian Academy of Natural sciences through the UN to gain and spread awareness. Many other groups and Ambassadors within the UN have worked with the Utah International Mountain Forum.

Many of the mountain women around the world are experiencing gender inequality. There is a constant battle for power and control. This is a cause for concern and a part of what the organization does is promote equality. There are many education barriers that inhibit people from progressing and increasing politically. This organization will continue to benefit people throughout the world as it maintains its international relations.

Another way that the Utah International Mountain forum has been increasing its stance is by implementing mountain targets. Some of the targets that were discussed in the forum were the following. “By 2030, protect and restore water related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes. To ensure and conserve restoration and the sustainability use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands in line with obligations, under international agreements. To ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.”

All of these targets need to be achieved by the year 2030. If achieved this will be able to build a better environment for the future of the world. That is why this is important to not only people living in mountain regions, but to all mankind.

Bethany Smith, UVU students