

## Utah Valley University – Mountain Day Observation



### *International Mountain Day celebration at Utah Valley University*

On December 2, 2019 I attended the 10<sup>th</sup> annual International Mountain Day (IMD) Observation at Utah Valley University (UVU). As someone who is from Utah, I find this to be a very important matter especially in a mountainous state such as Utah. I decided to come to this forum to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary for IMD and because it highlighted the importance of mountain preservation, and the speakers focused on topics such as how the community as individuals and students can play a role in the preservation of the rural areas in Utah.

The first speaker, Ms. Lacey Meyer, Vice President of Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU, spoke on Utah's rural areas are in an economic downfall, except for places like Moab that have heavy amounts of tourism from in and out of state. She highlighted that the best way that we can help these areas are by encouraging diversification through job growth in STEM, technology, and akin fields.

Education, bolster education in rural communities, and focus on partnering with these areas and communities to understand the complex issues that need to be solved. Along with the areas of focus on empowerment, needs to be a action as well, “these people are willing to change for progress”.

The second speaker, Mr. Michael Hinatsu VP of UIMF, spoke on how as individuals we can help in our own ways. The way that we can help individually is by attending events on campus and read articles in the newspaper to further educate yourself on the issues surrounding rural areas. Raising awareness of mountain communities and targets looking forward:

There are events coming up in the near future, UIMF advocacy campaign at the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the commission on the status of Women in March 2020 with PWG, BYU, U of U, and USU. Building on the successes from the 64<sup>th</sup> UN Civil Society Conference, held for the first time in Salt Lake City, UT on August 26-28, 2019.

What UIMF is doing is raising a crucial voice in the conversation whether it is on women and children in the mountains, poverty, and to be a watchdog. It is important to include the language of the mountain people in the documents of final forms and documents with the UN. To promote student education and involvement on the matter, after the two speakers, there was a presentation at the end where many members were awarded certificates for their participation in the events and their involvement in the program. Dr. Abdrisaev’s, a political science professor here at UVU and UIMF mentor, involvement in the program was recognized as well for his strong promotion and involvement of the program.

***Jake Jex, Student of Utah Valley University***