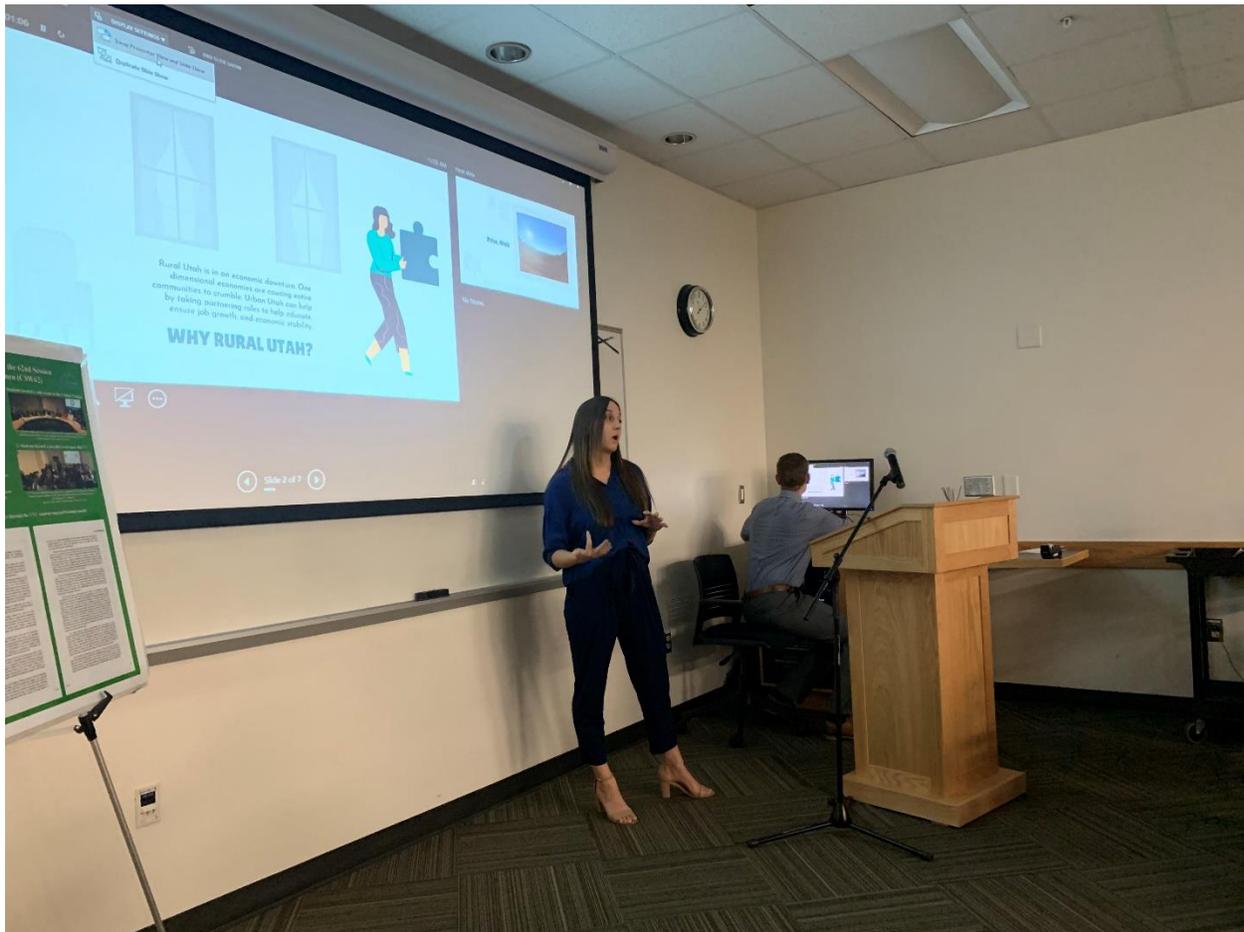


Participation at International Mountain Day Celebration at Utah Valley University

December 2, 2019 was the United Nations (UN) International Mountain Day Celebration put on here at Utah Valley University (UVU) by Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at UVU. The second session was called to order by the president of UIMF, Samuel Elzinga. He began by introducing the topic of that session, “Mountains Matter to the Youth.” According the UN, youth are defined as individuals between the ages of 18-34 and make up the largest part of political society and as such are most affected by policy decisions made today. This is especially true when it comes to inhabitants of mountain societies who are amongst the societies that struggle the most on an international scale. He announced the speakers of this session would be youth from UVU, Lacey Meyer and Michael Hinatsu.



Lacey Meyer speaks about rural development in Utah

Lacey Meyer was introduced first as a very politically involved individual who currently interns for UVU President Tuminez. Throughout her career she has been heavily engaged with policy involving rural Utah. She is particularly interested in this topic as she herself is from a very rural part of Utah.

She began her presentation by talking about the downturn that has been affecting both rural Utah and rural America as well. Traditionally rural communities depend heavily on energy production to support their economy. This might be oil, coal or gas. Over time these jobs have been outsourced to other places.



Michael Hinatsu speaks about UVU students plans to visit UN in 2020

With the downturn of rural communities across the United States, Lacey became interested in reversing this trend. As a result of her research Lacey decided that there are four areas of focus to help reversing the downward trend facing these communities. These focuses are working on the economy, education, partnering with the communities instead of using them and providing people

from these communities the opportunity to be empowered, such as academic conferences and panels.

She finished off her presentation by suggesting what people can do to get involved. Her suggestion was to start off simple, reading more about issues facing these rural communities and becoming more educated about the topic. As people increase their education, they might see a need that could fill and then work towards fulfilling that need in a partnership.

Michael Hinatsu was introduced as an aviation major with two minors in political science and constitutional studies. Michael was discussing the Beijing Platform for Action. The platform was written in 1995 and was an action plan focusing on women's gender issues. UIMF is working to help improve the Platform as it currently does not include mountain-based societies. In 2020 there will be a meeting in New York to discuss the Platform. During this discussion UIMF members plan to watch and promote the Beijing Platform.

A large emphasis of Michael's presentation revolved around student involvement. UIMF is dedicated to the engaged learning model of UVU and does an excellent job involving students. As a matter of fact, most events are completely student lead. Of course, faculty provide necessary support, but students are the ones who set things up and put events on. A number of members have even been able to give presentation to the United Nations and are able to gain special skills that allow them to go on and be experts in their fields.

I enjoyed the opportunity to see the development and preparation of the celebration. I was excited and inspired by the emphasis UIMF has placed on being a student driven organization. I am very much a fan of student research and opportunities for students, especially as someone majoring in political science which is a very experience based major. While both presenters piqued my interest, I was very inspired by what Lacey was talking about and thought of my hometown in rural Hawai'i. It has caused me to take a step back and see how I can look for partnerships with rural towns in America.

Overall, I was very impressed with the emphasis on student planning, organization, marketing and presenting that this conference allowed. Besides being a wonderful opportunity for those who attended, it was an even more empowering opportunity for the students to work together to make a difference.

By Antony Jackson, UVU student