

Contributing to the Partnership Between Utah and Morocco

This event brought together Utah Valley University (UVU) students and faculty as well as representative from the Utah National Guard and Morocco on March 10th, 2020 at UVU's Office of Global Engagement . We had the opportunity to learn about the partnership between Utah and Morocco, specifically, the progress, successes and challenges. The guest speakers introduced the State Partnership Program and the program's goals. Before attending this event, I was not very familiar with Morocco's history and government or their partnership with Utah, so this event was very interesting and gave me that opportunity to learn something new. It was very educational, and I enjoyed learning about the relationship between my home state and another country.



Guest speakers (left to right) Major General Jefferson Burton, Fatima Taki, Honorary Consul Keith Martin and Lieutenant Colonel Dustin Carroll

The four guest speakers had their own unique perspectives regarding the partnership, which was great for students like me, who are interested in international relations. The speakers and

students discussed topics related to building strong, positive international relations, sustainable development, and national security. What I appreciated about the different speakers was that they all spoke about the State Partnership Program, but they discussed different aspects of the partnership and different ways to contribute. In addition to an overview about Morocco, we learned about different careers and opportunities. The speakers have different careers working in military, government, and other fields. Because of their diverse backgrounds, we learned about the same topic from different cultural and professional backgrounds.



Students in the Office of Global Engagement listening to guest speakers.

This event was an excellent example of UVU's model of engaged learning because it was initiated and organized by students, who worked on the event as a group with faculty mentoring them when it was necessary. Responsibilities were divided among a small group of students; we had the chance to introduce the speakers, participate in the discussions and talk with the speakers after the event ended. This was a great opportunity for students to meet new people and become more engaged with the university.

This experience was a very valuable and interesting way to be more involved with my university in particular because it focused on strengthening the partnership between two communities who live in mountain areas and could learn from each other lessons how to do that in a sustainable way.



Sarah Michaelis introducing Ms. Fatima Taki.

As a political science student focusing on global politics, I felt that there was a lot of information discussed in this event relevant to my major and future career goals. I was able to learn more about topics related to the partnership between Morocco and Utah, as well as the work that goes into organizing this type of event.

Sarah Michaelis, member, Sustainable Mountain Development Club at UVU