

Hosting the International Mountain Day at UVU

On December 4, 2017, Utah Valley University (UVU) held its seventh annual International Mountain Day event. This event was put together by members of the coalition of clubs, the International Mountain Forum, at the university. Students, faculty, and local citizens all came together to engage and learn from local experts in their field about the United Nations sustainable mountain development (SMD) agenda and the UIMF's many initiatives in the works today, and hopefully many more tomorrow. The focus this year for the IMD was based around 'Mountains under pressure: climate, hunger, migration' and the social implications local and globally.

Event organizer and SMD club president Jenny Hoppie, asked me, as Vice-President of the Foreign Affairs Club, to introduce Miss Colleen Bye, representative of Salt Lake City Chapter of the Citizens Climate Lobby, for her masterful presentation and presence on climate change and how it affects our local community and environment. This task has offered me perspective on such matters regarding said issue locally, and how it relates to communities' similar positions across the globe.



Ms. Colleen Bay is presented with Certificate of Contribution from FAO-UN by Dylan Genes

Much insight was gained by students from organizing committee in how to network with local leaders such as Orem Mayor Richard Brunst and faculty department heads about raising awareness on important affairs with focus on mountain communities that can translate into global recognition and influence in particular through the United Nations Mountain Partnership. With such grand opportunity, this has given the student club members headway on building relationships with international student clubs and working together in future events promoting culture and sustainable awareness in focused regions. With UVU's engaged learning initiative, many of my close classmates and peers had the opportunity to put the entire event together by selecting and inviting dignitaries, such as Dr. Baldmero Lago, CIO / Vice rector for Global Engagement at UVU to be a keynote speaker. Dr. Lago announced at the event beginning that UVU was accepted as new Associated member of the United Nations Department of Public Information and new opportunities for students at the UN level to advance their education and international experiences.



Then the next speaker, Ms. Chelsey Butchereit, a Refugee Advocate, reported about refugee's situation in the state of Utah and assimilation issues. The next speaker was Ms. Gina Cornia, who has been the Executive director of Utahans Against Hunger since 2001 and for 21 years, she has worked closely with many elected state and federal officials on the issues of hunger and poverty. Afterwards Ms. Colleen Bye, spoke in length about climate change and focused on how it has affected Utah over the past decade. Ending the main attraction of speakers, two UVU students, Mr. Derek Garfield and Ms. Megan Raines, made presentations of their working projects, focusing on "indigenous people of Sami, Sweden" and "Helping orphans in Uganda". The event resulting with important and advantageous efforts and outcomes, as well as the special occasion of highlighting at the level of the United Nations, of how the state of Utah was able to offer a promising model and insight of sustainable mountain development. Many old and new members as well as leaders of the UIMF are continually thrilled to make ground on such efforts and bring to light the major accomplishments of our local communities in the area of mountain sustainability.

UIMF members brought forth the efforts and major accomplishments of involved UVU students once again. Thus, the Foreign Affairs club and its members have received the pleasure of learning and applying in its field, largely due to involvement in advocacy of the United Nations sustainable mountain development agenda. It is my hope to see UVU and its students continue to work together into the future, engaging and learning from all walks of life, towards a better more sustainable way of living in Utah while gaining a wealth of experience to accommodate their bright and applicable futures in their chosen careers.

-Dylan Genes, VP Foreign Affairs Club