

DAY 1 FOR UIMF AT CSW62: DEREK GARFIELD- HOSTING A SIDE EVENT

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UVU delegation at the United Nations

On Monday, March 19, 2018, students, faculty, and administrators from Utah Valley University (UVU), including members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of clubs at UVU, met outside of the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York City to register and collect grounds passes before participating in a side event during the UN 62nd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62), sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Bosnia & Herzegovina and Uzbekistan. Finally, our UIMF team understood in greater detail the importance of our work done during last several months when we were able to be engaged with these two missions which graciously agreed to sponsor a UVU-related side event after visiting the university through the Office of Global Engagement, discussing UIMF's projects and work since its founding in 2011, and plans for a side event with students and faculty.



The side event conducted that day was titled “Advocating for rural and mountain women globally through student engaged learning” and was held within the UN building, conference room D. It was a great experience for our team and Dylan Genes, Vice-President of UVU’s Foreign Affairs club, in particular, who moderated the event and ensured that it proceeded within the allotted time frame, which enabled all participants to have time to present their work. We didn’t know until the last moment who would greet us on behalf of the diplomatic missions due to the busy schedule of both top envoys.

As a result, Dr. Baldomero Lago, Vice-Rector for Global Engagement and Chief International Officer at UVU, opened the event and welcomed the delegation and visitors at the UN in attendance. After him, as presenters, we scheduled representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who have worked during last three years with UIMF in it’s mission to advocate for sustainable mountain development (SMD) and mountain women’s gender equity issues through the student engaged learning model. Distinguished members of partner NGOs who spoke included: Dr. Ross “Rusty” Butler, a focal point of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, an NGO with general consultative status in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); Ms. Wendy Jyang of the Utah-China F.I.S.H.D&C, an NGO in special consultative status in ECOSOC.

Two other UIMF members who participated in the event divided responsibilities in the following way: Matthew Rands, President, was scheduled to speak first by presenting information on UIMF’s mission and work on Women of the Mountains conferences; while myself, as UIMF Vice-President, handled the presentation of all digital media on behalf of the entire delegation and presented proposed language for the delegation’s goal to adapt the NGO CSW Zero Draft Document. Matthew then introduced student researchers from UVU

who participated in wide ranging research through engaged learning around the world to include: Rob Smith, UVU Student Body President, who spoke of the direct benefit of the engaged learning model for UVU students; Monica English, who researched gender identity issues in Utah and the involvement of women in the peace process in Northern Ireland; Amelia Cope, who researched Tsunami preparedness and education in Indonesia; Isak Larsen, who researched water sanitation and education in Senegal; Hannah Barlow, who studied rural mountain women and urban migration in Mexico. The last presenter in our event was Mr. Albert Pooley, President and Founder of the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association, who spoke about challenges for rebuilding families among Native American tribes and how his association helps to teach them.



UVU presenters at the side event “Advocating for rural and mountain women globally through student engaged learning” on Monday, March 19, 2018 at 11:30am at the conference room D within the UN premises

Participation in the CSW62 side event demonstrated the effectiveness of the engaged learning model in two primary ways: one, that members of UIMF are able, as students, to prepare, organize, and execute an event which promoted student engagement in, and advocacy for, causes relating to rural and mountain women in addition to their extensive experiences at local and regional levels, as well as the UN level; second, that the showcased student projects themselves demonstrated how engaged learning can be used to implement the UN SDGs more successfully. UIMF feels that student engaged learning is an effective, powerful tool in implementing SDGs on a local, regional, and international level and will continue to push for its adoption into consensus documents, such as the NGO CSW Zero Draft document, as well as maintain it as a centerpiece of our advocacy program in management and specialized implementation of the SDGs.



UVU delegation visits the United Nations Department of Public Information

After concluding the side event, the delegation met with Mr. Felipe Queipo, Information Officer for the United Nations' NGO Relations & Advocacy branch of the Department of Public Information (DPI), who has served as a liaison to UVU on behalf of his institution. UVU became an associate member of DPI in 2017 after submitting an application through the UVU Office of Global Engagement, which drew heavily from contributions made by UIMF to SDG advocacy and implementation, including the UN Secretary General's report on sustainable mountain development A/71/256 which recognized UVU and UIMF student engaged learning in advocacy for mountain women through hosting the international Women of the Mountains conferences since 2007. UVU's official partnership with DPI will allow for increased participation of UVU students and our local community in UN and SDG focused education events and programs, further increasing the ability of UIMF to provide students access to engaged learning initiatives with increased support from the university for the 2030 agenda, which facilitates UIMF's mission of advocacy. The meeting with DPI provided UIMF and students with a better understanding of the DPI and how they support NGOs in implementing and advocating SDGs.

Later that afternoon, the UVU delegation attended a meeting with the Director of the liaison office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO-UN), Ms. Carla Mucavi. This was the first time in that UIMF members had such a high-level meeting with FAO leadership. The FAO provided invaluable assistance to UIMF in being featured in the 2016 Secretary General's report on SMD, mentioned above. Director Mucavi explained the role of the FAO in monitoring the implementation of specific SDGs which include SDGs with mountain targets. UVU members and UIMF discussed their involvement, methodologies, and experience in executing SMD and improving outcomes for mountain women. All spoke of the important role that membership in the Mountain Partnership Secretariat (MP) played in

providing assistance and collaborative effort in developing UIMF's engaged learning program. The primary goals of this meeting were to increase student's understanding of how to influence language of key consensus documents at the UN, as well as the 2019 Secretary General's report on SMD, and the most effective channels within the FAO for students to find information which can help them gain access to greater partnership with the FAO by reaching out to the Department of Partnerships. The Director made special mention of fao.org/faostat/ and the FAO's free e-courses for increasing comprehension of the SDG and their indicators which can be used by UVU students and faculty when conducting research.

It should be noted that the UVU Global Engagement office livestream from the events, as well as the UVU Media team, which has been documenting the efforts of the delegation at the UN, will provide valuable digital media and film resources which will enable UIMF to attract additional students into participating in their advocacy for mountain women around the world and demonstrate that student engaged learning is an effective way for them to contribute to their communities.

Reflecting back on the events of the trip, I feel that I have been overwhelmed by the amount of new information that I learned about UN. This experience has been invaluable to my experience at UVU as I prepare to graduate. My emphasis in World Politics now feels complete. The classes I have taken in International Law, International Relations, American Foreign Policy, etc., were critical foundational knowledge to prepare me for this engaged learning opportunity. Being at the UN for CSW was the opportunity of a lifetime and has helped better prepare me and increased my chances for successful future opportunities of international collaboration and work. It may seem self-evident, but I became acutely aware of the necessity of developing strong networking relationships with organizations and individuals who share and support your message if you hope to accomplish lasting impact on any level, especially in a cooperative environment like the UN. I learned that one must take the initiative in building these relationships and work to keep them alive by sharing information and resources with partners so that they can improve their effectiveness as well. These are basic concepts which most of us learn through our lives, but the importance of them is multiplied when attempting to work on an international scale. My understanding of the UN has deepened and my awareness of the role that civil society plays in international affairs was sharpened. I know better how I can make an impact globally even if I do not work in a government. I hope to share this knowledge with my fellow students upon returning to UVU and using my position as Vice-President of UIMF to advocate more effectively for SMD and equity for women of the mountains.

Derek Garfield, Vice President, UIMF