

My Engaged Learning Experience During the Women of the Mountains Conference

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A lot of amazing and accomplished women representing mountain nations from different parts of the world graced the campus of Utah Valley University (UVU) during the [Fourth International Women of the Mountains Conference](#) (WOMC) under the umbrella of the United Nations Mountain Partnership located in Rome, Italy. Our university hosted the WOMC on October 7-9, 2015 and I was fortunate to be a part of the students organizing committee and to contribute to the success of the conference. Our team was very happy that for the first time we were able to host this high level international conference entirely through the students' efforts. We were also glad to spread a word and raise awareness among so many people in the State of Utah and Rocky Mountain region about important gender issues and challenges for sustainable development for mountain communities.

I am also a member of Utah Valley University Multicultural Student Council (UVU MSC), which is an organization committed to helping historically marginalized groups, and WOMC presented a great opportunity to network and get together with many dignitaries, diplomats, officials, experts and scholars from a variety of local, regional and international institutions. Surely these amazing people from all around the globe had much to teach us.

During the conference I was part of media team and I worked closely with Jenny Starley, PR and Fundraising at the WOMC organizing committee. I was in touch with local newspapers and I contacted, for example, local newspaper Daily Herald with providing editors with media kit and all necessary information.



(L to R): Yankila Sherpa, President, Snow Leopard Trek, Nepal, Mia Rowan, Communications and Advocacy Officer, Mountain Partnership, F.A.O – U.N. and Deann Torsak, Executive Secretary, WOMC during the conference

Because of my similar responsibilities with UVU MSC, I was also able to photograph the participants who attended many different events during the conference. I am glad that many of my photos were later posted on Instagram, Facebook pages, Flickr pages of the WOMC and then were shared on the similar pages of the Mountain Partnership secretariat in Rome, Italy.

Many women-conference participants brought a perspective to this campus that I felt has been missing. They showed how each and every single individual can make a difference. I especially felt that charm during my interaction with Yankila Sherpa from Nepal. There were many distinguished women with great accomplishments during the conference, but she helped UVU students feel like her fellow colleagues.

Many men also came and spoke at the conference and added to what many of the women shared. The whole conference was a major success in terms of the information and the education that was given about the importance for all of us to help mountain women and mountain communities to sustain themselves and be contributors to the economic success and prosperity of their nations. Students and faculty of our school and all of UVU certainly benefitted from the appearance of all guests and speakers.



(L to R): Uday Teki, Director of Special Projects, Pioneer Park Coalition, Salt Lake City, and Danny Davis during the Conference

I personally benefited from the conference form of education that I gained through facilitation. I was able to help some of the guests around campus and provide for many of their needs. I was also able to gain so much professionally and get acquainted with so many important people and experts in gender and sustainable development issues, along with the amazing thoughts and ideas that they brought. Personally, this was the highlight of my time at UVU thus far.

Danny Davis, member of the organizing committee, Women of the Mountains Conference