

WOM Conference Review

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Stereotypically, Americans are accused for not only knowing about our own country, but to being clueless as to the major issues happening around the world. I learned just how true this stereotype was when I visited Paris for a semester abroad. I was amazed and even somewhat jealous of their knowledge of global issues. A big reason I took Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev's Middle East Studies class was to do my part in changing that stereotype and get a better hold on important global issues. When the Women of the Mountains (WOM) Conference was brought up in class I knew immediately that I wanted to be a part of it. However, the more I learned about the conference the more I realized what kind of undertaking this project would take. With the confidence from key roles in the conference like Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev and a fellow student Parker Neilson, I was assured it would be worth the effort. So, although helping with the WOM Conference seemed overwhelming, helping with the WOM conference was actually very eye-opening because of being able to accompany dignitaries, listen to presentations, and getting an insider's look at what it takes to put on a university conference.



Mrs. Vicki Fenwick-Judy (C) during the conference.

My task for the WOM Conference was accompanying a dignitary, although the task was not as crucial, it was very eye-opening and important to me. I was assigned I Mrs. Vicki Fenwick-Judy. had done a little research beforehand and found out that she was The Mountain Institute's Program Manager over the Appalachian Mountains. Upon meeting her I was glad I got to accompany her. She talked to me about her role as program director and life in West Virginia. I was also lucky enough to accompany Jed Schilling who serves on the Board of Trustees for The Mountain Institute. It was great to see these two in action and learn about their lives.

It was exciting to have “free entrance” into the WOM Conference and get to sit in on all the presentations. At first I was astounded at how many different countries were represented. Each presenter made great arguments for the women in their regions. Also, I was able to be exposed to the different and distinct cultures from each presenter. I was amazed to see how many different cultures were in desperate need of aid. Also, I was very impressed with the work these presenters and their organizations have already accomplished. I was humbled at the life that each member of the conference had chosen to live. A life that helps those less fortunate than themselves. It was truly an honor to experience.

Finally, I was able to see a glimpse at what actually goes on in hosting the WOM Conference. I was able to see my fellow student Parker work with embassies across the world in effort to get dignitaries visas to come to UVU and present at the conference. I saw the media department endlessly working to set up mics and format presentations. I met other students early in the morning to bring dignitaries from the hotel to UVU and late at night to take them back to the hotel. I saw those higher up in the organization making sure everything was going according to plan. Also, I saw student employees working to bring excellent meals to all the guests. It was incredible.

In conclusion, what I thought was going to be overwhelming was truly eye-opening. I got to get an inside look at what’s really going on around the world and the people who are trying to help. It was an amazing experience and I’m looking forward to volunteer at the next WOM Conference.

Michael-Scott Montrose, member of the protocol, 2015 WOMC organizing committee
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