

## **My contribution to hosting Ambassador Eileen Malloy at UVU**

On March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017 Utah Valley University (UVU) students hosted United States Ambassador Eileen Malloy (retired). Ambassador Malloy is very experienced diplomat who served as the Ambassador of the United States to Kyrgyzstan and as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian affairs among her other postings at the U.S. Foreign Service. The initiative to host this VIP-guest belonged to the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF). The UIMF focuses on the promotion of the sustainable mountain development agenda of the United Nations in the State of Utah and is a coalition of student clubs on UVU campus. By hosting Ambassador Malloy, the UIMF provided students a unique opportunity to be a part of an engaged or experiential learning approach. This is when students can learn professional skills as a group and gain experience through hands-on activities by taking care of all aspects of a visit like this by themselves while faculty serve as mentors. The UIMF also sought to provide students an opportunity to gain knowledge about the Foreign Service and how to pursue that career through interaction with the Ambassador, and in my opinion that goal was soundly achieved.



*Aaron Holloway (standing) assists with Q & A session during the Ambassador Malloy presentation*

UIMF asked the Foreign Affairs Club and its President, Matt Rands to be a major host of the visit of this US diplomat. As a preparation to the visit, I helped Matt Rands with getting Ambassador Malloy's schedule in order, as well as organizing the events she would eventually attend. There were several times when potential events conflicted, but thanks to Matt's leadership and input from

the team which included myself, we were able to resolve these problems. While many of us had been assigned individual activities, like making reservations for the presentation rooms, or securing the equipment necessary for the events, the entire visit required from Matt Rands coordination of many students involved and thanks to the engaged learning approach students were able to achieve that goal jointly as a team.

The Ambassador came for the full day, speaking at several classes, meeting faculty and the University Administration, and answering a constant stream of questions by students and faculty throughout the day and her many meetings. Andy Loy, another UVU student in uniform as a member of the ROTC, and myself, had the honor of escorting Ambassador Malloy throughout the day's activities, ensuring protocol was followed and acting as guides. Ambassador Malloy's first presentation, which focused on the career and life of the U.S. Foreign Service officer, its rewards and difficulties, was followed by a lengthy Q and A session where she eagerly took questions from students, members of the local community, and faculty. During this event I assisted with the Q and A session by acting as a question screener, helping the crowd of more than one hundred people who attended to interact with the Ambassador.

The initial presentation of the Ambassador Malloy in the University's library building was focused on the State Department and life in the Foreign Service. At the same time, due to her extensive experience in regions of Europe and Eurasia, she was quickly asked to discuss modern issues relating to Russia, the current U.S. administration, and the preverbal reset that every president since Ronald Reagan has attempted to have with the former USSR. Her message, steeped in cold war era political history and diplomatic / military thought, was not only consistent but timely and relevant to the modern problems that the current administration has with the crisis in Crimea, Syria and with Russian relations in general. Ambassador Malloy expressed a need for the current U.S. administration to understand the depth of the threat, to have empathy for our allies in the area both NATO members, and affiliates.

I completely agreed with our distinguished guest that the understanding the Baltic and Former Soviet States unease, the risk and potential for war between Russia and these smaller eastern European nations, and what the United States' role in this complex quagmire of international relations are ways that the current administration can help to ease tensions and defuse the looming specter of war. Ambassador Malloy noted that though there are some positive signs, such as choosing General Mattis as U.S. Secretary of Defense, there is still the need for the administration to develop cohesive and coherent foreign policy on Russia. Unfortunately, the current administration not having one throws, for example, the entire Crimea affair, which is coming to a critical point, into doubt.

My participation in this event has increased my connections to many of the local thought leaders in Utah in my field, as well as provided me with ample opportunity to learn how to manage, execute, and run an event with dignitaries of intellect and stature of Ambassador Malloy. I was involved with every aspect of her visit, from the planning, creating posters and informational materials, to driving her from hotel to and from her scheduled events. Participating in every step of this process has given me additional skills in diplomacy, sharpened and made my professional contacts more diverse, and provided me with real world application to many of the issues I've

learned in my years here at university.



*(L to R): Aaron Holloway, Regan Warner, Ambassador Malloy and Dr. Cholpon Akmatalieva assemble hygiene kits for the Days for Girls NGO to be shipped to Samoa*

I am personally grateful for the opportunities provided by UVU and the UIMF to be a part of the engaged learning initiative, which allowed Ambassador Malloy's attendance and interactions with us students, and am both anxious and excited to see what the future holds.

*Aaron Holloway, member of the UIMF*