

## UN Day at Utah Valley University focuses on Sustainable Development Goals



*(L to R): Andre Jones, Derek Garfield and Dylan Genes, UVU students during the UN Day event*

United Nations day at Utah Valley University (UVU) on October 24, 2017 is sought to encourage and inform students of all majors and backgrounds of all the ways they can support the activities of the United Nations. This year, it was dedicated to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), being the goals adopted by the UN in 2015 as key targets for adequate regional living. The United Nations adopted 17 SDGs and 169 specific targets. SDGs replaced the Millennium Development Goals, which served for the UN as an effective platform for improvements since 2001. The Office of Global Engagement at UVU hosted the event as an opportunity for students and faculty to be engaged in the implementation of SDGs, which the international community will use as indicators for each nations progress until 2030.

Members of Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at UVU including our Foreign Affairs club, participated in the event in order to raise an awareness among the students of the importance of particular goals with focus on mountain communities, and how UVU students both contributed to the adoption of mountain targets among the SDGs by the UN in 2013-2015 and how various causes and projects at UVU contribute to the implementation of those targets in mountainous regions. Clubs have banded together for this event through UIMF to discuss and inform students and future members of possible joint efforts between the NGOs and UVU students to raise awareness about sustainable mountain development issues, most notably regarding women in mountains, as well with the United Nations regarding most all areas of improvement.

From water conservation, energy efficiency, and agriculture, we have had the pleasure of meeting students and recruiting future members that are vital to helping push our mission of mountain sustainable living. UIMF and UVU's Foreign Affairs club has worked closely together to help provide progress in these areas of concern. Our goal was also to present our activities with advocacy of the sustainable mountain development agenda of the United Nations and implementation of the mountain targets as specific initiatives to be included under the UN's Department of Public Information (UN DPI). UVU's application to be accepted as Associate Member of the UN is currently under consideration by UN DPI. During the event, clubs offered numerous different options in ways students can push themselves into future careers with a wealth of experience to accompany them, all while actively taking part in improving the future for others around the globe. Foreign Affairs Club could provide them numerous opportunities of working with diplomats, UN officials and international experts and gain experiences in protocol, networking and other activities in the area of foreign affairs. Many students were glad to get acquainted with experiences of UIMF members and the Foreign Affairs club, and in particular, hosting more than 20 Ambassadors to the United Nations and UN officials during 2013-2015 as part of the campaign to adopt mountain targets among SDGs.

While UIMF offered initiatives with student engagement in Utah's mountainous region, the event included numerous UVU student groups with similar goals pursued abroad in such regions as Africa and Latin America, as well as UVU's national security club and peace and justice club to name a few. The growth and progress of our efforts ultimately fall on the students who continue to provide due diligence and insight, to impose and improve our mission for

mountain sustainable living around the world. UVU provides our students excellent opportunities to do so through the student engaged learning approach, which the university nurtures since 2008, and which allows students to learn professional skills and experiences through practical activities and application with faculty helping them as mentors.

*Dylan Genes, President of Foreign Affairs Club*