

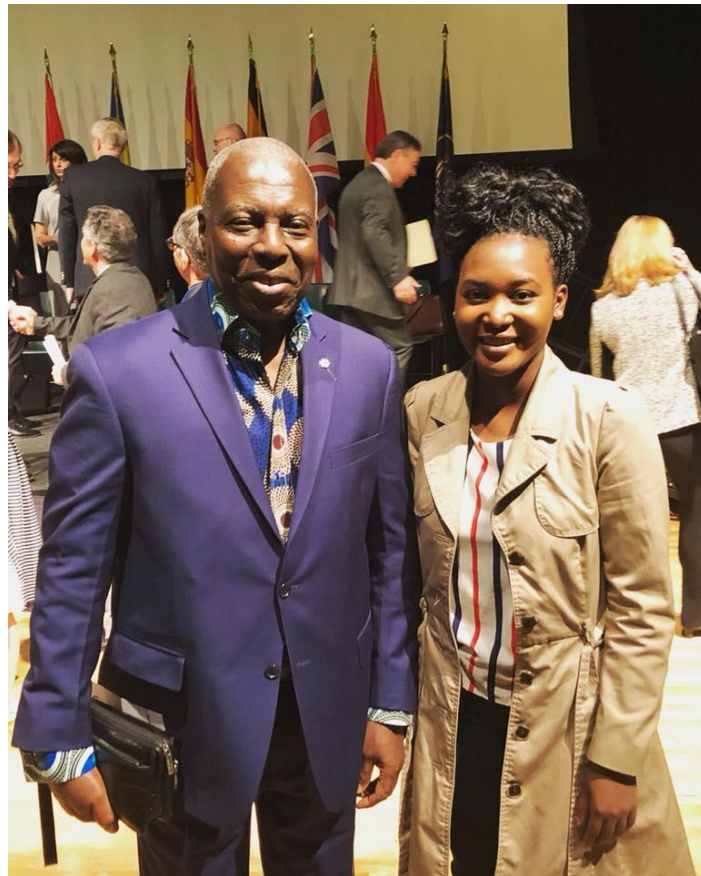
Engaged Learning experience during the Utah Valley University Diplomatic Conference



Break-out session of the second Diplomatic Conference at UVU

On March 12, 2018, I had the privilege to help co-host diplomats from different countries during the second Diplomatic Conference organized by the Global Engagement office at Utah Valley University (UVU). We had dignitaries from Peru, France, the UK, Ghana, Uganda, Spain, etc. here at UVU. I am a student ambassador at UVU, and during the visits of all these diplomats, my job as part of the Foreign affairs club was to help all the diplomats around the campus simply by directing them where to go. I also had the privilege of being in the breakfast room with all the diplomats alongside their fellow colleagues who had accompanied them. This is a part of UVU's established tradition that allows students to participate at breakfasts or luncheons with foreign dignitaries as a way to help build personal relationships with the visiting dignitaries.

During the breakfast, I met the consul general of Peru, Mr. Roland Denegri. The first question I asked him was: “What is Peru best known for?” and he’s responded that the food made in Peru makes the country special. I was surprised by his answer because I expected him to say something about how Peru is well known for its environment, or perhaps its hard-working people. After a while, I came to appreciate his answer and how simple it was because it spoke volumes not only about his personality, but also about what the people of Peru might be like. Also, during the breakfast, I had the honor of meeting the Ambassador of Ghana to the U.S., Mr. Barfour Adjei-Barwuah. He was friendly and easy to communicate with. I came to know from him that this was his first time in Utah and he was very impressed with Utah and its people. I also came to know that he has been the Ambassador for 8 months only and resides in Washington, D.C. . He hopes to come back to Utah again soon to learn more about the state.



Marie-Chantal Niwenshuti with Ambassador of Ghana to the United States Mr. Barfour Adjei-Barwuah

We had a plenary session during the conference. It was in the UVU Grande Ballroom, there, we heard remarks made by our Utah Valley University president, Matthew Holland: he welcomed all the foreign diplomats. We also had remarks from Christina J, Hernandez, regional director from

the office of foreign missions in the US department of the State in Los Angeles. The keynoter speaker was Lieutenant Governor of the State of Utah, Spencer J. Cox. He spoke to the students and diplomats in attendance about how great Utah is doing economically, how we are the fastest growing population state, and how we have led the nation in economic development. He also talked about how most people in Utah are bilingual and that it is due to our education system when children in the first grade are learning and speaking Chinese, Spanish, French, Portuguese etc. The other reason we have the fastest growing bilingual population is due to a requirement for students who have completed high schools to go on a mission on behalf of the LDS Church: males for 2 years and females for 18 months. These missions give students the opportunities to serve in other nations and learn their cultures, people and how they do business.

Lastly, the Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski was in attendance and gave remarks on the development of Utah and how what is she doing is not just facilitating trade and business, but also promoting women power and growth. During the last part of the conference, diplomats were assigned to different conference rooms where they addressed questions from UVU students and faculty members. It was a great conference and I was very privileged to have been there.

Marie-Chantal Niwenshuti, member, Foreign Affairs Club at UVU