

In-Class UN Speaker



Ms. Hawa Diallo, the speaker that came to class on Tuesday, April 3rd, 2018 at Utah Valley University (UVU) was very interesting and had some awesome stories about her upbringing as well as how she got interested in the United Nations (UN) and what she does for them. I think that she was an excellent example of how the UN works and what they can offer for countries around the world, as well as opportunities for students like ourselves. Ms. Diallo initially told us that she had grown up in Sierra Leone, Africa. Her father was an Ambassador for the United States so she was very exposed to politics and the ability to help people at a very early age. She talked about the first time she was able to visit New York City with her father when she was very little. When they later moved to New York, she talked about how her father's example, and her time in Africa shaped who she was and what she wanted to accomplish in the United States. She said that on the playground she was always standing up for the rights of others. She talked about how working with her father, and being exposed to public service at an early age allowed her to more fully understand the importance of standing up for the rights of those around her.

Ms. Diallo talked about how she was able to attend college and was never sure what she really wanted to do. She really said that she was very similar to all of us, which I thought was very interesting. I feel like many times we see people that are in high positions, and positions of power and we don't think that we can every become like them, or that they must have done monumental things to get there. I really like how she stated that when she graduated college, she had no idea what she wanted to do and her mom was the one that set up an interview for her at the UN. She interviewed for a tour guide position and was hired on the spot. She said that this was her first real experience working for the UN and is really when she fell in love with what she had been doing her whole life, rendering public service. She talked about how she basically volunteered for anything that was made possible to her. She was a peacekeeper in Cambodia for many months and right when she got back home, her friend asked her if she wanted to go to Somalia and do the same thing. She said that she emphatically accepted and days later they were on an airplane to Somalia. She talked about the danger that she saw there and said that it opened her eyes to the many options that the UN could offer her.

I also thought it was incredible that she talked so highly of Utah as well as UVU. She said that they had talked about moving a major UN conference to Utah and that if it were to happen, she would love to have the help and support of UVU students during the conference. She took many questions about the UN and about how she obtained her position and said that she would recommend starting as she did, with a tour guide job or working with the peacekeeping. She said that she has worked in many different departments in the UN but she has always come back to the Department of Public Information (DPI) because she loves the face to face option that it gives her in her service.

All in all, I thought it was very inspiring to hear from her and to more fully understand what the UN is all about. It definitely got me excited about the thought of being able to do work like that one day and all the possibilities that it can provide. I would be very excited if the conference under the auspice of the UN DPI would be able to come to Utah next year and we were able to assist with it.

Tim Jenkins, Utah Valley University student