

UIMF Hosts Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the UN



Ambassador Mahmaminov presents a book about Tajikistan to UVU Library

On Friday, October 5, 2018 the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU) had the opportunity to host Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations (UN) Mr. Mahmaminov. This was an excellent opportunity for UIMF to make a presentation to Ambassador Mahmaminov on UIMF past and present efforts to contribute to sustainable mountain development (SMD) agenda of the UN. This was also a great opportunity for UIMF to demonstrate UVU's engaged learning model as students were largely responsible for the planning and hosting Ambassador Mahmaminov during special meeting. I had the pleasure of helping to prepare for this special event as part of the UIMF team. This included such things as ensuring UIMF's director of public relations was advertising on several of our social media accounts in advance of Ambassador Mahmaminov's visit and working with UIMF president Samuel Elzinga to help oversee completion of assignments given to various UIMF members based on a task list posted online. Beyond overseeing this meant offering my services to other members if they felt

they needed assistance though that did not prove to be the case as they went above what they were asked to do demonstrating excellence in their work. During our meeting with Ambassador Mahmaminov I informed him on UIMF hosting the 2015 Women of the Mountains Conference, at UVU which advocated women living in mountain regions across the globe and was highlighted by the UN Secretary General's report on SMD to the UN General Assembly in July 27, 2016. This was a special moment for me as it allowed me to briefly talk about and reflect on my experience being a part of the group of students that organized and ran the 2015 Women of the Mountains conference. I was also able to highlight UIMF efforts to advocate for mountain women at the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW62), for three mountain targets implementation at the 2018 UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF 2018) on sustainable development and recent recognition from U.S Congressman John Curtis (R-UT) UIMF efforts in promoting Utah's SMD model among the members of the international community and UN in particular.



(L to R): Mark Driggs with Ambassador Mahmamin Mahmadaminov

Following mine and several other's presentations, members of UIMF had the opportunity to listen to Ambassador Mahmaminov's lecture to the general public on Tajikistan and their clean water initiative in standing with Sustainable Development Goal #6 (SDG#6). After his excellent presentation, as another example of UVU's engaged learning model several UIMF members myself participated at a luncheon with Ambassador Mahmaminov and UVU current and former faculty. This was truly an amazing and unique opportunity for UIMF members to have hosted such a distinguished guest. This provided in particular new UIMF members an opportunity to get acquainted with engaged learning model, a signature initiative at UVU and to learn and observe the advocacy of UN sustainable mountain development agenda in action. I look forward to a continuing relationship between UIMF and Tajikistan and hopeful for the great work we can accomplish together to benefit mountain communities.

Mark Driggs is Vice President of Campus Outreach for UIMF/Foreign Affairs Club