

UIMF Hosts Indigenous Panel Discussion



(Photo by Mark Driggs)

On Wednesday, November 14, 2018, the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU), hosted a panel discussion on sustainable mountain development (SMD) challenges faced by indigenous tribes in Utah. This was an excellent opportunity for UIMF to learn more about some of the local SMD challenges Utah minorities are dealing with as well as develop relations with indigenous tribes. I was struck by the breadth of SMD challenges that hinder these tribes. Many of these challenges such as lack of communications, lack of infrastructure, and lack of development are exacerbated by the absence of a political and economic base. It is important to look at global SMD efforts however observance of local mountain communities is necessary in order to prevent marginalization.

As Vice President Campus Outreach, it was my responsibility to oversee UIMF efforts to organize and host this panel. This gave me the opportunity to work closely with William Gum, UIMF Director of Club Relations as this was a project he had been anxious to work on for some time. It was inspiring to see someone who is passionate about aiding indigenous peoples work tirelessly

to make this panel a reality. Hosting this panel also gave UIMF Campus Outreach the opportunity to implement new administrative and operational changes designed to help our directorate increase efficiency and effectiveness. Some of these changes included a detailed breakdown of tasks, increased collaboration, hard deadlines, and a system of accountability. As with any new initiative there were successes and failures. Both are important indicators of how effective these administrative and operational changes are going with the successes offering encouragement and failures offering instruction.

I am confident that UIMF members will take such lessons to heart and seamlessly apply them to future efforts. After all that is what UVU's engaged learning model is all about, moving learning beyond the classroom and into professional experiences in order to gain relevant experience and move closer to becoming practitioners. As I help host events such as this one I am reminded of how fortunate I am to be enrolled at UVU and be a part of UIMF. I look forward to future events and am grateful for the opportunity to be a member of UIMF.

Mark Driggs, VP of Campus Outreach, UIMF