

Ninth Annual International Mountain Day Celebration at Utah Valley University

On Monday, December 5, 2018 students, professors and members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) met together at Utah Valley University (UVU) in celebration of the Ninth Annual International Mountain Day. The UIMF is a coalition of clubs at UVU for students working toward sustainable Development as advocates for Mountain Region Policies.



Sam Elzinga speaks during IMD 2018 at UVU

Sam Elzinga, the President of UIMF, opened event by expressing why mountains matter and the importance of working toward preserving mountains first. Then he went on to share how UVU's engaged learning offers students something Ivy League Schools wish they were capable of offering their students. He also informed the audience of the personal invite received from Permanent Mission of Kyrgyzstan at the United Nations (UN) for International Mountain Day on December the 11th.

Andrew Jensen, the President of the Model UN Club introduced Dr. Baldomero Lago, the CIO/ Vice-Rector for Global Engagement at UVU. Through his work Dr. Lago has helped UVU become Utah's first organization working towards sustainable development through the UN Department of Public Information. Through that partnership UVU will be able to host UN DPI conference next year outside the Blue Zone and contribute to meetings in which over 3000 people all around the globe are present. As Dr. Lago said, UVU was contacted and noticed by institutions from in Europe and worldwide.

Michael Hinatsu, a member of the UIMF, introduced then Mayor Richard Brunst of the city of Orem. Mayor Brunst explained how the pioneers recognized the refuge, safety and peace which the mountains provided. He related that to us today and how we use the mountains for water, air, lumber, iron, recreations and much more. Everything is possible because of these mountains and their important resources.

Joseph Lloyd, the vice president of the UIMF, introduced Dr. Ross Butler, the main representative at UN for the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, an NGO in general consultative status with UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Dr. Butler shared the progress of the programs at UVU with focus on UN and for example, the participation of students at UN political forums, including the Commission on Status of Women among them.

Hannah Bieker, a member of the UIMF, introduced Mrs. Wendy Jyang, the president of Utah China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands Development and Commerce, an NGO in special consultative status with UN ECOSOC. Ms. Jyang shared her personal experiences of working towards building families through singing, focusing on health, and strengthening individuals character for mountain societies. She feels through the use of global influence students can become impacted and go on to sharing what they have learned in return.

Kyle Williams, a member of the UIMF, introduced Ms. Rebecca Bindraban, the Editor-In-Chief of the Youth and the Mountains Journal. Ms. Rebecca Bindraban is a current student at UVU and works with SMDs natural interaction and reflective ways to impact Sustainable Mountain Development. The journal she edits, provides a platform for ideas that may aid Mountain Communities, and sustainable development in Utah and the US.

At the end of the gathering, Megan Davis, UIMF member presented certificates of FAO-UN to students and faculty, who advocated for SMD in 2018. It was truly inspirational event.

Laila Mitchell, UIMF member