

## International Mountain Day at Utah Valley University



On December 5 2018, the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU) hosted the eight annual International Mountain Day celebration. The reason for this event was to recognize different events and activities that the UIMF was a part of through out the year of 2018, as well as to recognize different achievements between the students, faculty, and community. As an introduction to the event Sam Elzinga, the President of UIMF expressed his feeling and thoughts on this past year and what has been accomplished. One of the events that he had mention was when he was given the opportunity to speak for 3 minutes at a High Level Political Forum on sustainable development. He also spoke how foreign Ambassadors UIMF was able to co-host in2018 and one of those individuals being the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to UN, Mahmadamin Mahmadaminov. Sam Elzinga also brought up one of the new opportunities that he has been given when he will go to speak at the event in the UN in New York on December 11, 2018.

Shortly after Sam's introduction and the accomplishments that he discussed, there were several guests that gave their presentations. Many of the speakers talked about their personal experiences with different countries and how those activities have changed their perspective.

The first speaker, Dr. Baldomego Lago, CIO/ Vice-Rector for Global Engagement at UVU, was introduced by Michael Hinatsu, a member of UIMF. Dr. Lago mainly touched base on the conference that will take place in the Salt Lake City in August next year. He expressed his gratitude to students for getting involved in different activities on campus

and that it was one of the major success points for the future. For students to be involved will make them stand out and give a better shot at different universities or job applications that might come their way. After his presentation he was awarded a gift on behalf of the UIMF and a certificate presented to him by Megan Davis, UIMF member.

Following Dr. Bladomero Lago, Mayor Richard Brunst, city of Orem was introduced to the public by Andrew Jensen, President, Model UN Club. Richard Brunst, received his degree in Political Science, from BYU university. Currently he is the owner of Western Pipe Coaters & Engineers and has been a part of this company for 31 years. He focused his presentation on the mountains and their importance to us as. He is an advocate for protection of mountains as well as water, and air. His passion comes from work and that he was able to do many researches throughout his life.

Joseph Lloyd introduced Dr. Ross Butler, the main representative at the United Nations for the Russian Academy of Natural Science. His presentation was based on the NGO experiences at UN. He provided example of letting three UVU students speak instead of him at the UN forum and with that point proved that it is extremely important to let students to be involved in different types of positions and that it will improve their chances in the future. He also said that he would like to continue working with the UIMF students and give them a chance to speak for themselves at the UN in particular. To me as a student it was interesting to hear his views on Russia and his position as a director of the Utah-Russia Institute.

The next speaker was Mrs. Wendy Jyang, a President of NGO from Salt Lake City named Utah-China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands Development and Commerce. She focused her speech on the importance of the humanitarian work and families that are in need of service. She mentioned that she only began to work with the UN in 2011, however she was apart of humanitarian work way before that time. She showed many pictures during her presentation, which were very powerful to me personally. Mrs. Jyang shared many personal experiences and stories that she witnessed being abroad. Now her work allows foreign students to come to the US to get higher education and see the culture and the lifestyle.

The final guest was Ms. Rebecca Bindraban, the Editor-in-Chief of the Youth and the Mountain Journal. She is a current student at UVU and a Vice president of the UIMF.

She made a presentation on the main issues on 2017 issue of the journal. She also talked about how to get involved with the journal and her personal experience related to it.

At the end of all presentations Megan Davis, UIMF member presented certificates to all of the students and faculty, who contributed to the advocacy of the UN mountain agenda, as well as all of the speakers. Every speaker was also awarded a gift from UIMF. Overall, the event was very well organized and extremely educational.

*Victoria Bindrup, UVU student*