

What You Missed on Campus



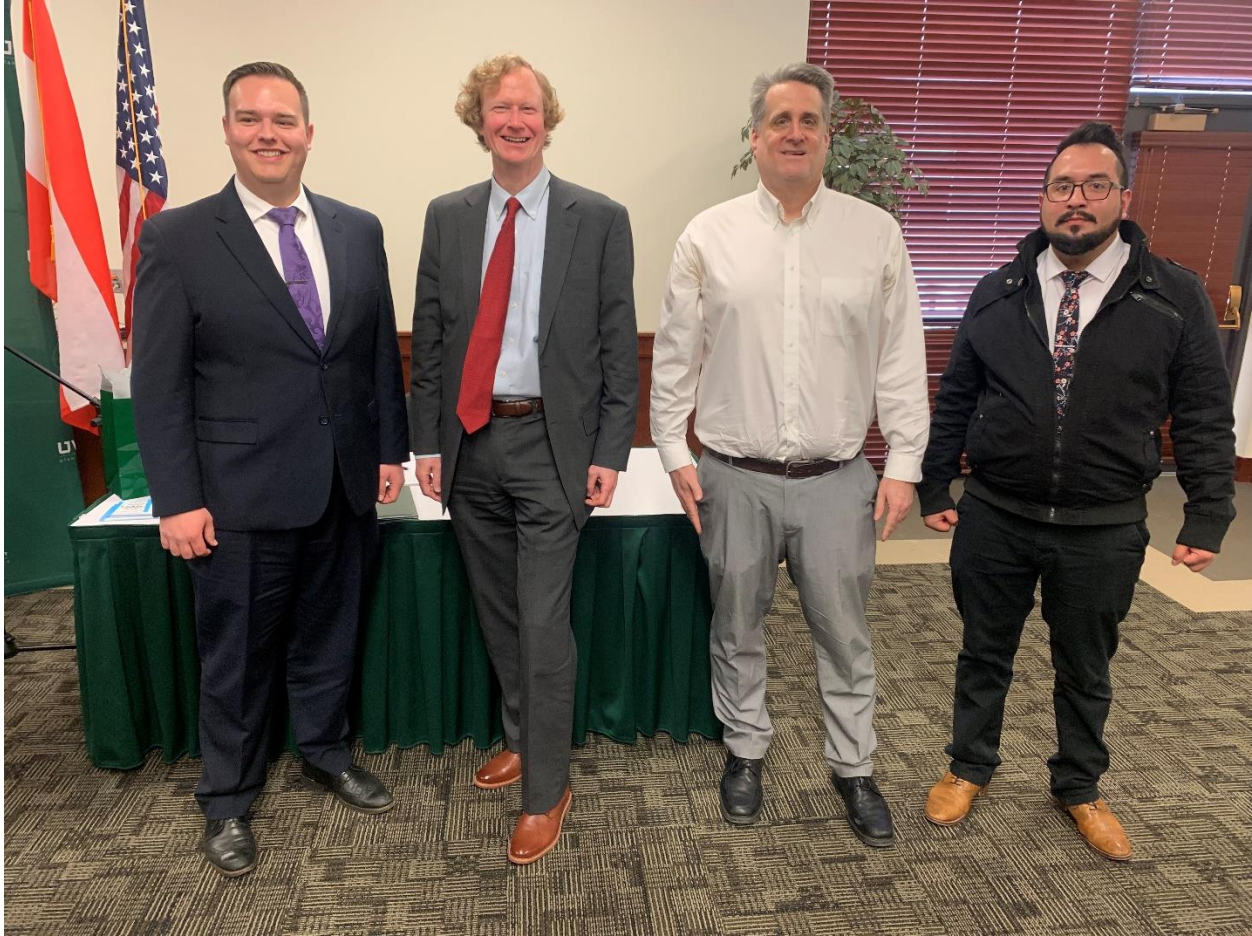
The Permanent Representative (PR) of Austria to the United Nations, His Excellency Jan Kickert, visited Utah Valley University (UVU) on February 20th, 2019. This was a packed event because of the hard work of UVU office of Global Engagement and the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs on campus, which deserves a lot of credit for their effort in inviting the Permanent Representatives of different nations at the UN and hosting them.

Ambassador Jan Kickert, who had just returned from a local skiing trip, visited UVU to discuss foreign policy. He mentioned, that during UN voting, Austria and Australia would get confused for each other and they would lose votes. This was fixed when the UN created pre-printed voting cards with the country's names. The crowded room at UVU burst into laughter. The PR of Austria explained that foreign policy is influenced by geography and history. Geography doesn't necessarily determine foreign policy but can provide a key insight to understanding a country's foreign policy. Austria divides the eastern country from western country and has thousands of

years of complex history. Austria formally was a large empire until World War I; at the end of the war, it disintegrated into multiple countries. During this time, Austria had six million people, two million of which resided within the capital, Vienna. The remaining people didn't identify to a unifying nationality and held referendums that would have resulted in two of nine provinces becoming part of neighboring countries. Ambassador Jan Kickert called Austria of 1918 an "unwanted country" and that only in time did people "identify it as an independent country" (Kickert). During the Great Depression, Austria had a short civil war and an undemocratic regime. In 1934, Austria had fascism, which was similar to Italian fascism, with Benito Mussolini being Italy's ruler at the time. Austria was opposed to Nazism.

In 1938, Austria was annexed by Germany (Wikipedia). Ambassador Jan Kickert compared this annexation to the case of Crimea of 2014, but acknowledged that there were many Austrians who were among the "worst perpetrators of the Nazi death machine and there were many perpetrators" (Kickert). This had an influence on Austrian foreign policy after the war. After World War II ended, Austria was occupied by Allied Forces, and the capital was divided in four parts, just like Berlin. This is not the common knowledge. After the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, Austria offered military neutrality by not joining NATO. In 1955, Austria negotiated a state treaty and gained its independence and joined the UN. This made Austria more flexible during the Cold War as a neutral state and offered a meeting ground for Soviet and NATO leadership, as well as a UN meeting ground for complex diplomatic efforts. Neutrality was beneficial because it allowed Austria to advocate disarmament and attract one of the UN headquarters. Austria has created a venue for UN to discuss human rights, civil liberties, and other kinds of negotiations.

In 1989, when the Iron Curtain collapsed, access to neighboring countries opened along with the opportunity to join the European Union. Ambassador Jan Kickert explained that a country's most important relationships are with its neighbors. This granted access to 500 million people and an expanded market. One aspect of diplomacy is economic diplomacy. Within the UN, Austria and its 193 members are allowed to discuss the issues that are most important to them. Without multilateral cooperation, small states have a harder time influencing international relations. The UN is a collective mission that works together, unified to work toward solutions. Austria is an active member who supports peace and security for the world. Austria has labored to ban landmines, nuclear weapons, and explosives used during war in populated areas. Austria supports the UN sustainability goals and promotes efforts to work together collectively.



(L to R): Brandon Pedler, UVU student, Ambassador Jan Kickert, Dr. Geoffrey Cockerham, Associate Professor of Political Science at UVU and Dirk Gum

If you missed out on this event, it is extremely unfortunate because we don't know when or if the PR of Austria to the UN will return to UVU. This is an important reminder to all students to become engaged in activities, clubs, and in the classroom. We all have the opportunity to host such prestigious members of our global community and we should thank the student who work hard to provide these services. I learned a great deal from this experience. I witnessed students and faculty working to set up this event. They taught me that if I put the extra time and effort into my studies and in extracurricular activities, then I can accomplish things I previously thought were unobtainable. Thank you.

Dirk Gum, member, Model UN Club at UVU

Citation Page

Kickert, Jan. "H.E. Jan Kickert- Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations." *YouTube*, Utah Valley University: Office for Global Engagement , 19 Feb. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ejk-FRW56I&feature=youtu.be.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austria_%E2%80%93_the_Nazis%27_first_victim