

Reflections on Day One Activities in New York City for CSW63



UIMF delegation starts preparations for CSW63 official activities in New York

On Sunday, March 17, members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU), met in New York City to begin preparations for attending events related to the second week of the 63rd Session of the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63). Members of the UIMF delegation prepared by checking in and becoming familiar with the UN grounds and area surrounding the UN compound.

The night before, Saturday, March 16, myself and Abdulrahman Alghanmi, Hannah Bieker, and Megan Davis met at the Salt Lake City International Airport in Utah to travel together to New York. As the leader of this delegation, one of my responsibilities was to ensure that all members of our delegation received tickets to travel to New York and arrive there without issue. Because of the help of Aldon Trimble and Rebecca Bindraban, who I assigned to be group leaders to figure out logistics and travel funding, as well as the efforts of Mrs. Kimberly Williamson, Administrative support to UVU's History and Political Science department, who booked our flights, the travels occurred without much problems. A minor problem arose when airline employees miscommunicated with Abdulrahman, making him think his flight was only one-way to New York, but this issue was resolved quickly, and we made it on our flight without delays on our part.

Four hours later, we landed at John F. Kennedy International Airport around 6:30am (New York time), grabbed our luggage, and then rode an Uber car arranged by Megan Davis to meet UIMF mentor, Dr.

Baktybek Abdrisaev and Ezra Pugliano at Dr. Abdrisaev's hotel, where it was decided previously that all delegation members would bring their luggage until they could check in to their accommodations. By 8am, we had all dropped our luggage off and all of us walked with us to Café Olympia, where according to our agenda prepared by Aldon Trimble, we would have some group lunches and debrief during CSW63. The café being only a short walk from both our lodging and the UN compound, after eating breakfast Dr. Abdrisaev and Abdulrahman Alghanmi left us. Ezra Pugliano, Hannah Bieker, Megan Davis, and I then spent from 8:30am or so until 12:00 walking around the UN compound, watching a half-marathon, and sight-seeing.

We were able to see a number of interesting sights, including Grand Central Station, Times Square, Central Park, Columbus Circle, and other places along the way. We visited Grand Central Station because our entire delegation would there at 12:00pm under the central clock to walk as a team to the UN compound to tour locations relevant to our purposes. It was interesting for me to see the vast differences between my hometown and Utah and New York City's subway system, which we used to go to Times Square. At Times Square, we again watched the marathon and visited such sights as the M&M Factory and other shops. We also walked to Columbus Circle and through Central Park, as well as spent some time visiting Trump Tower.



From right: Ezra Pugliano, Megan Davis, Hannah Bieker, and Michael Hinatsu, UIMF members outside of Trump Tower

Just before 12:00 we arrived back at Grand Central Station and met the rest of the delegation, had lunch, and walked to the UN compound. We followed the orientation route plan, designed by Aldon Trimble which walked us through important buildings such as the UN International Children Education Fund (UNICEF) headquarters, the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) headquarters, as well as a number

of permanent missions to the UN, including the United States'. The tour included the UN IDs office where we will receive our grounds passes on Monday, which was one of the more important parts of the tour. At nearly all of these places, we took group pictures.



Grand Central Station. In the center is the famous clock, where to the left of which the UIMF delegation met to travel to the UN compound.

After the tour, the remaining time was free for us to use however we wished. Ezra Pugliano, Abdulrahman Laghanmi, and I checked into our Airbnb apartment, unpacked and spent some time resting. Afterward, around 6pm, I briefly met with our mentor, Dr. Abdrisaev and went over statements to edit, finalize, and help to polish them. I ate dinner at Morning Star Café to satisfy my urges to eat corned beef and cabbage for St. Patrick's Day, and then returned home.

So far, New York has been a very eye-opening experience for me, not only because of the amount of people and tall buildings, but also for the different yet similar lives people here live. I was struck by the number of tourists, but more struck by the number of homeless or impoverished people, feeling a sense of gratitude for my own living situations and for the opportunities provided by UVU, UIMF, and others for me to travel and contribute to local and global initiatives. Personally, it was exciting for me as well to see many of the buildings I had only seen on the news or in movies, or in pictures in textbooks. I look forward now to participating in CSW63.

Michael Hinatsu, Vice President, UIMF