

UIMF Brings Awareness to Mountain Women at the UN 63rd Commission on the Status of Women.

March 18, 2019 is a day that will live in infamy, well at least for me, as it was the day that I went in the U.N. Headquarters (UNHQ) in New York, for the first time. The day started off with the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs from Utah Valley University (UVU), delegation convening at the building where we were to receive our United Nations photo ID credentials which allows us access into the UNHQ until the end of the session of the CSW63 which March 22, 2019 was.

We then explored all that the United Nations Headquarters had to offer. I and others went to see the bookstore with many UN souvenirs, books, postcards, and mementos. The store also had UN Peacekeeper helmets, which we tried on.



In that moment, I got the notification that the Daily Herald, a prominent newspaper in Utah, had just published an article about me presenting at the United Nations which included segments of my interview with them. It was a pleasant surprise to receive such good news in the middle my incredible experience at the United Nations. https://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/uvu-student-saratoga-springs-native-to-address-u-n/article_d2c59dbc-e4d7-5b0f-806d-79fd33c57cd2.html

Then, Dr. Abdrisaev, the UIMF mentor, lead a few of us to explore rooms for different side-events and the delegates lounge at the UNHQ. The long room was wall-to-wall windows where no matter which part of the room one sat in there was a view of Long Island skyline.



The view of Long Island from the delegate lounge. Other UIMF members and I in the delegate lounge.

It goes without saying that lots of hard work, long nights, and perseverance got our delegation to the United Nations. That coupled with the overnight traveling the day before and the preparations before the final hour made the lounge the perfect place for me to mentally center myself through meditation. I was thankful for the space to join many other delegates from around the world as we used the quiet and secluded space for activities such as meditation, negotiations, and napping between battles for gender equality at both the official and unofficial levels.

In the afternoon, the Utah International Mountain Forum delegation went to the Salvation Army Auditorium located far from the UNHQ, but close to our place of accommodation. The goal of the visit was to attend a parallel event a day before ours and to learn how side events are to be done with agenda, logistics, time management, moderation, etc.



Poster advertising a parallel event



Dr. Abdrisaev gives the thumbs up as panelist speaks.

The event titled “Re-creating a Healthier Environment for Empowering Women and Girls” sponsored by Jieh Huey Social Welfare & Charity Foundation and comprised from the group of presenters including Hsin Chin Shih, Dr. Ali Mazzara, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, Dr. Antoinette Ellis-Williams, and Pauline Tzuang. We watched Dr. Abdrisaev, UIMF mentor, present on how Utah Valley Universities Student Engaged Learning (SEL) Model, helps shape students into more well-rounded individuals and what it takes to execute the SEL model as a professor. During the event, something exactly happened what he warned us about, when they went over their allotted time so there was not enough time to make it to the question and answer portion, and it was disappointing for us indeed. However, it seemed to me that Dr. Abdrisaev and the other panelists had everything under control. Still, it was interesting for me to learn from the event how different speakers managed their time, interacted with the audience, and were able to deliver the message about empowering women and girls by creating a healthier environment.

After the parallel event, we went back to the Church Center for the UN near the UNHQ and looked at the room of our parallel event the next day. There was still a parallel event taking place and we were able just to see the size of the room, how many seats were in there, central stage and tables to place our advertising materials. We agreed to come to the event much earlier to bring the posters we prepared, UIMF brochures, other information, and in particular our signature green stress-balls with a logo of the History and Political Science department and its Twitter and Facebook account.

Overall, the first day was a great success and I cannot wait to see what the next day has in store for the UIMF delegation at the UN in New York.

Hannah Bieker, Rotaractor, UIMF member