

Hosting Mr. Richard Jordan through student engaged learning

Utah Valley University students had the honor and privilege of hosting Mr. Richard Jordan, the Dean of UN Non-governmental representatives during April 8-11, 2019. Mr. Jordan has dedicated nearly his life to working in the UN. Over nearly 40 years of UN-related work, he has shaped the landscape for NGO's working with the UN. He has worked closely with organizations such as the Assembly of World Citizens, Global Future Network, Global Education Associates, International Council for Caring Communities, and the Royal Academy of Science. He contributed to forming the Committee for Sustainable Development, and presented at several UN summits, including the Rio +20 conference in 2012.



Mr. Joel Frost introduces Mr. Richard Jordan to the UVU audience

Mr. Jordan was also the CEO of the World Harmony Foundation and brought many different world leaders together on the 60th anniversary of the UN founding to ring the Harmony bell. He is also one of the five original co-founders of the Earth Negotiations Bulletin.

About a month before this event came to fruition, I was asked by my colleague, Joel Frost, President of the Foreign Affairs Club, as part of the Utah, International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at UVU, to work on planning this momentous occasion. At first, I was tentative about this work, feeling that anything I did would not be good enough. After all, I would be planning an event for such a high-level individual affiliated to the UN. However, I was thoroughly convinced by my professor, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, that even though I was a young undergraduate student, I could still be an integral part of hosting Mr. Jordan. When Joel Frost provided me with a list of tasks for the visit, I decided that I would draft and write several discussion topics for our meeting with Mr. Jordan, in the hope that they would drive meaningful and thoughtful discussion between the students and our guest.

As I read as much as I could about our guest through Internet and UIMF web-site, and learned what I could, I had trouble deciding which topics could be worthy of our guest. We also had limited time, so I wanted to make sure that the topics were thoughtful, specific, and beneficial to both our speaker and the students. Our university is unique in that we have the UIMF, which has a specific focus on sustainable development in mountain communities. Considering Mr. Jordan's history and focus on sustainable development, and considering the fact that many of those attending are members of the UIMF, I decided that questions that focused on sustainable development and what we could do as students is to aid that development in mountain communities. After considerable thought and deliberation, I came up with these topics for the consideration of Mr. Joel Frost and a Foreign Affairs club -

- What is the best way, as students, to get involved in the community in such a way that allows us to improve sustainability and development in mountain communities?
- Importance of improving mountain communities and how it affects the world as a whole
- How can UVU best maximize its participation and recognition in the 68th UN Civil Society conference (68UNCSC) in August 26-28, 2019?
- How can UVU get the local community in the area involved in the 68UNCSC as it is a very important opportunity for them as well?
- What was the main reason for Mr. Jordan to be interested in the UN, and how can UIMF members further the work on these issues?
- What does Mr. Jordan's resource library contain, and what is the best way for us to maximize its use?
- How can UVU and the UIMF use the resource library to further our university's involvement in global issues?
- Thanking Mr. Jordan for his help in allowing UVU students to speak in the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development during July 19, 2018 at the UN

- Ways we can help in the development of mountain communities not just in Utah, but on a global scale as well
- What are some of the road blocks UIMF members could face in their advocacy efforts at the UN, and how they can work a way around them?

Although not all proposed questions UIMF members were able to discuss during the major meeting with Mr. Richard Jordan, they still raised them during three days of the visit of the dignitary.

I am honored to have been able to work on this event and was proud of the talking points I was able to come up with. I hope that they were useful and respectful to Mr. Jordan and that he appreciated the direction they took our discussion in. I also want to thank those that allowed me to work on this event as it was a truly amazing experience of a student engaged learning.

Caleb Stowell, UVU student