

Celebrating 10 Years of International Mountain Day at Utah Valley University



The Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) celebrated its 10th anniversary of hosting International Mountain Day on Monday December 2nd, 2019. UIMF and its affiliates work hard to draw attention to the development of mountain communities, and International Mountain Day furthered that cause. Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, one of the professors heavily involved in UIMF, heavily stresses the need for student engaged learning throughout his courses. Student engaged learning is a teaching theory that involves heavy student involvement and learning through peer teaching, student lead events, and participating in our communities as much as possible. International Mountain Day used student engaged learning heavily in order to promote student growth and learning.

Almost all of the speakers at the event were students. Lacey Meyer, the President's Intern for the 2019-2020 school year and a key player in the workings of the UIMF, presented on the importance of mountain communities, especially in rural Utah. Ms. Meyer drew heavily on personal experience for talk, as she grew up in one of these small towns, Price, and has a unique outlook on this situation. She stressed the economies of these small towns, and how if we do not

draw attention to the situation, they could fail completely. The economies of these towns rely heavily on energy sources, mainly coal and natural gas. Instead, Ms. Meyer proposed ways to place an importance in the development in the STEM fields and tech fields within these towns. She has worked for political campaigns and has interned at Senator's offices in order to further this goal. She proposed several ways to further this cause, such as providing better education in these areas on how to improve their economies and also paying attention to the results. She also expressed that we as students don't need to be involved in political campaigns or senator's offices, we just need to attend events related to these issues or read an article related to these small towns.

At the end of the event, yet another example of student engaged learning was on full display. All of the students who had participated in planning and hosting events for both Rotaract and UIMF this semester were able to receive a certificate and a picture with the president of the clubs, including me. It was a very special experience to be recognized for my contributions to the clubs this semester and further showed the impact of student engaged learning on students. Nearly every one of my peers in Dr. Abdrisaev's class received a certificate for their participation this semester. Through student engaged learning, I was able to work heavily in my community and my peers in order to create a different and productive learning environment that led to immense success this semester. I would like to thank Dr. Abdrisaev for all he has done for me and my classmates this semester, and all of the opportunities afforded to me through his class.

- *Caleb Stowell, UIMF and Rotaract member.*