

Sprinting to the Side Event's Finish at CSW67

On March 6th - 8th, Utah Valley University (UVU) Rotaractors traveled to the United Nations 67th Commission on the Status of Women to present in a parallel event. Rotaract is a student club that works with Rotary International to provide students service opportunities in their community. As a student club Rotaract provides opportunities for students like me to be involved in different activities through a Student Engaged Learning (SEL) model. SEL places focus on providing students hands-on experience in their field of study, and makes my education feel more practical since I can see how I may apply it after graduating. UVU Rotaract is a member of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU which advocates for sustainable mountain development in the State of Utah and globally.

Today was planned out to give our delegation time to attend the different events being hosted at CSW 67. Alitha Thompson and Tristin Smith were our two students working most closely with the permanent mission from the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations, and I volunteered to help them with the preparations for the side event. This meant that I was unable to attend any other events, but it was still an opportunity to learn more about the work that goes into a side event.



UIMF members helping prepare for the Kyrgyz Republic's Side Event on March 8th

The first thing I was tasked with was creating a Powerpoint presentation that would serve as a visual aid by highlighting the speakers who were presenting. Powerpoint is a program I do not normally use. This combined with some of the limitations I had surrounding the event sponsor's logos made for a more frustrating experience than I initially would have liked, but I was able to make it work with help from other students, and the internet.

The Powerpoint came out looking great, but ultimately had to be scrapped because it didn't fit into the side event when the details had all been finalized. I would have been a little more frustrated that the work was ultimately wasted, but I ultimately enjoyed the process of learning Powerpoint and designing the presentation. The work needed to be done because it seemed like the direction the event was going in, and we wouldn't have had the time to do it all after details had been finalized. It was unfortunate, but that's just how things go when you need to work on projects that still have different factors up in the air.

We took a lunch break, and then I reconvened with Tristin and Alitha to see what final things needed done. At this point we had enough details finalized that we knew what needed to be finished was refining the speeches from our university staff for the event. I was given Dr. Rusty Butler's speech for revisions, and it was one of the most difficult speeches I've had to revise.

Speeches tend to build towards some sort of theme or thesis, and I was struggling to figure out what Dr. Butler's was at first. After a few rereads, I realized it was about the history of UVU working with the Kyrgyz Republic. With this in mind it became much easier to continue working. Dr. Butler's speech had to fit within three minutes, which meant that I now had to change my attention from refining direction to trimming fat.

Since I hadn't initially worked on this, it was hard to tell what was essential and what was not. Ultimately I was able to cut things down to what should have been an acceptable length, but

the experience gave me a newfound appreciation for speech writers. I imagine the experience would have been much easier if I had been involved in the initial draft, or had more of a relationship with Dr. Butler, but lacking those two things made it really hard to write for him.

Today was on the slower side in terms of what happened and what I accomplished, but I am still thrilled to be here at CSW 67. I'm getting to learn so much about potential careers I can do with a political science degree, and I am so grateful that UVU gives students these opportunities.

McKay Brooks - UVU Rotaractor