

Day 1 at CSW67: Hosting and Speaking at a Parallel Event

On March 6, UIMF delegation members arrived at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. First, we took a group photo under the flags of the UN member states to the start of the amazing opportunity we were taking part in.



The UIMF delegation meet outside of the UN headquarters for the first time.



Natalie walking past the Italian gift to the UN: “Sphere within Sphere.”

Soon afterwards, we met with Her Excellency Ms. Aida Kasymalieva, the representative of the Permanent Mission of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations. She met with our delegation to discuss the side event we were assisting the Permanent Mission host on Wednesday, March 8. Hearing about Ambassador Kasymalieva's objectives for the Kyrgyz Republic regarding the empowerment of mountain women was very exciting, especially with our efforts in Utah in mind. She congratulated us on our accomplishments at Utah Valley University and seemed interested in our invitation to fly out and join us someday.



UIMF members meet with the Permanent Representative Aida Kasymalieva.

After meeting with Her Excellency, we started the preparations for our parallel event at the United Nations, “Empowering Mountain Women through Inclusive Student-engaged Learning Educational Initiative.” As a member of the Secretariat team, I had helped students write and revise their statements for the past few weeks. Once we got into the room, we had just fifteen minutes to rearrange the room and set up for the event.



Natalie gives their statement to a crowded room at the parallel event.

I personally spoke about the necessity of states to include peace and justice studies curriculum in educational opportunities to mountain women and girls. This is vital to empower them to be integral actors of social and political change in their communities and achieve gender equality. I proposed the Student-engaged Learning model as the ideal structure for women and girls to receive this education so they may collaborate on complex peace issues and gain hands-on experience. Overall, speaking at the UN was an incredible experience that I will never forget.

Natalie Williams, UIMF Delegation Member at CSW67