

John McClure: Finding Your Niche



John McClure during lecture before students

On Wednesday, February 14th, we had guest speaker John McClure join our United Nations Sustainable Development Goals class. Mr. McClure is a former UVU political science student and was very involved, acting as the first president of UIMF from 2011-2013 and participating in several conferences and events around the world, including the Rio+20 conference. He earned a master's degree from St. Thomas in Terrorism Studies and has had an impressive career using his unique skill set in political science, terrorism, and law enforcement capacities. John is now a professor at UVU with the National Security Studies program and is working on his PhD.

Since we were in a classroom setting, John prepared a PowerPoint that showed some highlights from his journey from student to grad student to working professional. He shared several stories and memories, including the time he had to give a speech in Peru and met another American student just in time who was able to be his translator. It was clear that he worked very hard as an undergrad in order to be involved with international organizations and policy-making at a high level. With story after story, John cemented the lesson that all the efforts made as a student served him in finding the right career after his graduation.

After sharing his journey, John shared some insight and advice on how to find and build a career. He emphasized finding and maximizing your niche, which comes through the unique classes, experiences, and interests each student has. He also mentioned that students have much to offer in the world of civil service and policymaking and encouraged us to be involved in big projects and hone our writing skills by practicing different types of writing. Lastly, he challenged us all to get published and develop our resumes and professional skills even before we graduate.



Group photo of John McClure with faculty and students after presentation

I learned a lot from Mr. McClure, and he raised my vision of what is possible to accomplish as a university student. I learned that as a fellow dad, John had to make lots of sacrifices to both excel in school and provide for his family, but it is possible and necessary to fulfill your potential. I also learned that UIMF and other student groups offer life-changing experiences for students to participate in government both locally and worldwide, and that sometimes, ‘faking it’ before you ‘make it’ is a valid strategy.

The presentation John gave was really impressive, because it was clear how passionate he is about political science and national security. I really enjoyed all the pictures he added, which reflect dozens of experiences he created for himself as a student in order to learn and grow. Perhaps the most interesting part was when he broke down his professional career, mentioning jobs in law enforcement, state government, a fusion center, and a joint terrorism task force for the FBI. John’s ultimate goal was being a professor, but it was important for him to have real experience of the issues he’s learned about so he can be more prepared to understand and teach.



Abe Weisler with John McClure

Overall, Professor John McClure's visit and presentation was inspiring and a uniquely valuable experience. I took lots of notes on what he mentioned, but also what his stories and challenges mean for me and my future career after UVU. Our school and teaching staff have much to offer to help us be prepared to excel in whatever career we choose. But that excellence starts now, with hard work, passion, and engagement. That is how we find our niche.

Abe Weisler, UVU Political Science Student