

Derek Garfield: Lead, Shape, Form, and Inspire through the SEL Model



Derek Garfield speaks to students at the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals class

On April 5, 2024, our Political Science 3640 class on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, had the wonderful opportunity to hear from former Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) Vice President, Derek Garfield. UIMF is a coalition of student clubs at UVU that advocates for sustainable mountain development in the state of Utah. And at the United Nations. During his time at Utah Valley University, Derek was pursuing an undergraduate degree in Political Science with World Politics as his concentration, and international relations as his interest. His proactiveness in UIMF activities led Derek down the road to receiving a Master's in Sustainable Development. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Forest Policy at the Swedish University of Agriculture Sciences (SLU).

During Derek's time at UVU, he had the opportunity to participate in the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which was hosted by the United Nations and offers the opportunity for Non-Governmental Organizations to

promote and advocate for their causes in relations to women and the roles they play in the world.



UVU Students and Faculty during side event at CSW62

Derek and other members of the UIMF club were able to promote Sustainable Mountain Development at the side event, which was displayed in person at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and the parallel event which was hosted online. Through the progressive Student Engaged Learning (SEL) model at UVU, Derek and his colleagues held the responsibility of facilitating their participation in the CSW events, under the mentorship of their teacher.

The SEL model encourages students to be active and fully engaged not only in the core curricular activities but also in the extra-curricular activities outside of the classroom, where UIMF excels in hosting, planning, and executing events. Derek and the UIMF team prepared for CSW62 through the SEL model by hosting a panel of NGOs accredited under the UN. This event included representatives from three NGOs with the status of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the brainstorming sessions on October 2, 2017. UIMF members were also able to host Vice President of United Families International, Marcia Barlow. This event focused on learning how to advocate at the UN. The third example of the SEL action helped UIMF members build ties with the UN diplomats for joint advocacy. On February 5, 2018, UIMF members participated in the contribution to the co-hosted event by the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the UN, H.E. Bakhtiyor Ibragimov at UVU.

A gem in his resume at UVU, Derek and his colleagues in the UIMF club submitted a written statement through three NGOs, which was then distributed as an official document of ECOSOC in March 2018. Further credentials of the hard work of the members from the CSW62 were shared by the UNSG on Sustainable Mountain Development at CSW64. Through his proactivity in UIMF activities, Derek learned the importance of finding shared values to make the most of joint advocacy efforts. Collaboration not only helps you contribute your skills but also helps you grow as a person and a student. Derek expressed that the behind-the-scenes details are important for the success of the activity/ event. Repetitive practice enables adaptability and confidence. To always remember successful engagement takes time and practice.

One thing I appreciated about Derek sharing his time at UVU and his involvement with UIMF, was sharing how important it was to record your impact. When you look back at your time in college you can see that you were not only successful in your academics but also in being a part of something bigger than yourself. Derek's commitment to the SEL model goes beyond what

he learned at UVU, but how he can implement this model in his classes. He used the SEL model and his experiences at UVU to give him the confidence to take on the responsibility of Student Coordinator in his master's program. Just as he was able to have the opportunity to take a leading role, to shape, form, and inspire, he is providing those same opportunities to students in Sweden.

Janessa Purcell, UIMF President-designate