



CONNECTING
GLOBAL
WORK TO
UTAH'S
FUTURE

UNESCO CHAIR ON AI AND ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARDSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

UVU UNESCO CHAIR
ANNUAL ACADEMIC
REPORT 2025 - 2026



UNESCO CHAIR FOR AI AND ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARDSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES.

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WELCOME TO THE UNESCO CHAIR AT UVU



Baldomero Lago,
UVU UNESCO
Chair Director



Maritza Sotomayor,
UVU UNESCO Chair
Associate Director

August, 2026

One year into our work, the UNESCO Chair has grown from four founding project countries into a network spanning sixteen projects worldwide, from Peru and Cambodia to Greece, the Philippines, and Ukraine. It has been a year of significant milestones, including research that reached the desk of Peru’s President, UNESCO recognition of our heritage work in Greece, and the launch of our first Chair publication.

At the heart of this global expansion are our students, whose immersive fieldwork experiences are transforming classroom knowledge into meaningful action. Working alongside local communities across diverse cultural and geographic contexts, they contribute directly to projects that address heritage preservation, community resilience, and sustainable development challenges. These hands-on international experiences not only deepen students’ understanding of complex global issues but also equip them with the skills, perspectives, and sense of responsibility needed to become future leaders in sustainability. In turn, the lessons, partnerships, and innovations they bring back enrich our local community, creating a dynamic exchange of knowledge that bridges our teaching mission with tangible impact around the world and helps build more sustainable futures for all. We invite you to explore these pages and see that impact firsthand.

Sincerely,

Baldomero Lago, UNESCO Chair Director

Maritza Sotomayor, UNESCO Chair Associate Director

UVU UNESCO CHAIR EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Adam Ogurlu - School of Education	Prof. Kevin McCarthy - College of Health and Public Services
Dr. Carl Canlas - Smith College of Engineering and Technology	Dr. Kathren Brown - Academic Affairs Deputy Provost
Dr. Hilary Hungerford - College of Science	Kaise McLane - UNESCO Chair Administrative Assistant
Dr. Yi Yin - College of Humanities and Social Sciences	Felipe Queipo - United Nations Advisor
Dr. Cheung Chau - School of the Arts	



SMITH COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
"Advancing AI Education"
PHILIPPINES

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
"Building Bridges"
PERU

SMITH COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY
"Capturing the Agios Achilios of Pentafos"
GREECE

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC SERVICES
"Public Health Project"
CAMBODIA

"We're there not just to do research, but to **build relationships** and keep **collaborating in the future.**"
-Stone Smith, Peru Project

"This project pushed me to apply my technical skills in a **real-world environment**, helping me understand how classroom knowledge transforms into practical, impactful work."
-Reese Nelson, Greece Project

"I just felt so **lucky** to be a part of UVU... I think the best way to find that **passion** within any field is to see it **firsthand.**"
- Ella Desmarais, Cambodia Project

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC SERVICES
"EMS Training"
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

"For me, it's really **opened my eyes** in regards to what patient care can look like in other places... **being able to step into someone else's shoes.**"
- Daryl Petersen, DR EMS Project

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
"Aprender Y Emprender"
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

"I learned that research isn't just about data collection. It's about **responsibility**...Scientific research must be both **rigorous** and **compassionate.**"
-Carol Bejar, Peru Project

EMPOWERING STUDENTS GLOBAL FIELDWORK



COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
"Geography and Climate Risks"
CAMEROON

"The added prestige and pressure of the **UNESCO** label was welcomed and **motivates me to deliver great results.**"
-Michael Bailey, Greece Project

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
"Mental Health and AI"
KENYA

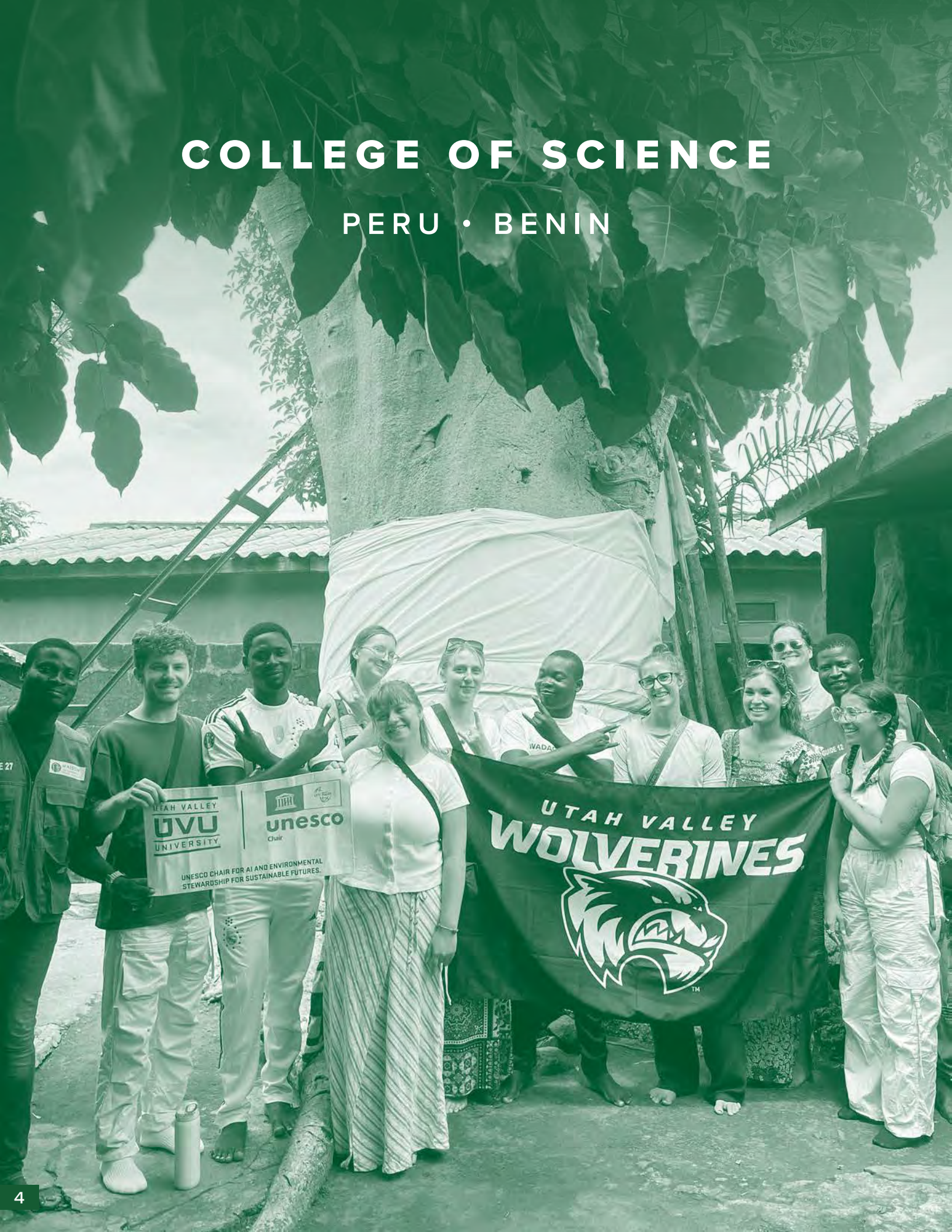
"To get to experience both EMS and hospital work in a different country, to see how they operate... has been super beneficial for me"
-Gavin Payte, DR EMS Project

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
"Special Education and AI"
CAMEROON

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
"Sacred Forests"
BENIN

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
"Collaboration with Atlantic Education"
THAILAND

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC SERVICES
"Supporting Families and Children with Disabilities"
INDONESIA



COLLEGE OF SCIENCE

PERU • BENIN

PERU WATER PROJECT

BUILDING BRIDGES: COLLABORATIVE
SOLUTIONS FOR WATER SUSTAINABILITY
BETWEEN PERU AND UTAH



Dr. Lauren Brooks
Biology



Dr. Eddy Cadet
Earth Science



Dr. Sally Rocks
Chemistry

SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS

4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	Target 4.7 Indicator 4.7.1
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	Target 6.3 Indicator 6.3.2 Target 6.6 Indicator 6.6.1
13 CLIMATE ACTION 	Target 13.3 Indicator 13.3.1
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 	Target 12.4 Indicator 12.4.2 Target 12.8 Indicator 12.8.1

PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES

Universidad Nacional de Educación
Universidad Nacional de Huancavelica
Universidad Nacional de Trujillo
Universidad Nacional del Altiplano
Universidad Nacional del Santa

MUNICIPALITIES

Chosica
Santa Eulalia
Trujillo
Puno



PERU

WATER

STUDENT REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD

December 5, 2025

In December 2025, a team of Utah Valley University faculty and student researchers returned to Peru for the second phase of a multi-institutional environmental research collaboration focused on water quality. Following an initial field sampling trip in the spring and months of laboratory analysis and coordination, this visit centered on deepening collaboration with Peruvian university partners while advancing research on microplastics, trace metals, and microbiology.

For the students involved, the experience was not only about scientific data, it was about people, partnership, and responsibility.

A SHARED COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE SCIENCE

One of the defining features of the second visit was its emphasis on long-term capacity building. Rather than conducting research in isolation, UVU students worked side by side with Peruvian faculty and students, sharing protocols, troubleshooting challenges, and strengthening systems that would allow the work to continue locally.

“SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
MUST BE BOTH RIGOROUS
AND COMPASSIONATE.”

-CAROL BEJAR, TRACE
METALS RESEARCHER



PROJECT

Chemistry student Stone Smith, who worked with Dr. Sally Rocks on microplastics, described the collaboration as the most meaningful part of the trip. “The best part was definitely working with all the people who were there and getting to meet so many new and amazing people,” Smith said. “Anytime I got to work in the lab with the students, it was really fun to show them the process, explain why we do what we do, and help set them up so they can keep doing this work.”

That sustainability became tangible when essential lab materials, often difficult for national universities to access, were shared with partner institutions. “They were so excited, it was like Christmas Day,” Smith recalled. “It was cool to think that we’re there not just to do research, but to build relationships and keep collaborating in the future.”

“WE’RE THERE NOT JUST TO DO RESEARCH,
BUT TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND KEEP
COLLABORATING IN THE FUTURE.”

-STONE SMITH, MICROPLASTICS RESEARCHER



UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES ON THE GROUND

“IT WASN’T JUST ABOUT
COLLECTING SAMPLES...IT WAS
ABOUT WORKING IN UNITY
AND AS A TEAM, AND HELPING
STUDENTS UNDERSTAND”

-CAROL BEJAR, TRACE METALS
RESEARCHER

For Carol Bejar, an environmental science student working with Dr. Eddy Cadet on trace metals, the project carried both professional and personal meaning. As a native of Peru, returning home as a researcher offered a powerful perspective. “Participating in this project was a very meaningful and transformative experience for me,” Bejar said.

Her work focused on water and sediment sampling, lab preparation, and coordinating data across institutions in Chosica, Huancavelica, Trujillo, and Puno. Conducting research in high-altitude regions and resource-limited laboratories required adaptability and creativity. “These are national universities, and sometimes they don’t have



the budget for specialized instruments,” Bejar explained. “So we had to be creative designing equipment, adjusting protocols, and figuring out how to work safely and accurately with what we had.”

Beyond the technical challenges, Bejar emphasized the importance of teamwork. “It wasn’t just about collecting samples,” she said. “It was about working in unity and as a team, and helping students understand how to analyze water and soil issues that directly affect their communities.”



“CHILDREN WERE DYING BECAUSE THEY DIDN’T HAVE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER. IT WAS HEARTBREAKING. I KNEW THAT WHAT WE WERE DOING WAS IMPORTANT.”

-AMANDA LEE, MICROBIOLOGY RESEARCHER



WHEN RESEARCH BECOMES URGENTLY IMPACTFUL

“WE ALL SHARED THE LOVE OF SCIENCE AND THE DESIRE TO HELP GET CLEAN, SAFE WATER TO PEOPLE WHO DIDN’T HAVE IT.”

-AMANDA LEE, MICROBIOLOGY RESEARCHER

For Amanda Lee, who worked alongside Dr. Lauren Brooks on microbiology, the significance of the project became clear almost immediately. “I think when the importance of this trip clicked for me was arriving at the labs the first day and seeing everything they had built and put together for us to be able to do this work,” Lee said.

The realities surrounding water access in Peru reframed the research as an urgent public health effort. “We had to get our water from bottles and boxes,” Lee recalled. “Just hearing the stories from the mayors about how sick people were getting and how many children were dying because they didn’t have access to clean water. It was heartbreaking. I knew that what we were doing was important.”

A major goal of the microbiology work was establishing local capacity. “The main goal for Dr. Brooks and I was to help establish this lab and then to teach the students there what we were doing and how to do it,” Lee explained. “They were so interested in learning, and some came from very far away. We all shared the love of science and the desire to help get clean, safe water to people who didn’t have it.”

SHAPING FUTURE SCIENTISTS
AND GLOBAL CITIZENS

Across all three research areas, students gained a clearer understanding of how environmental data informs policy and public health decisions. Smith’s work on microplastics focused on identifying sources and pathways rather than quick solutions. “Our main role is helping them learn where they are and why they’re there,” he said, emphasizing the importance of baseline data for long-term mitigation.

For Lee, that connection reached the highest levels of leadership. “I have never had the experience of seeing how my research can help save lives and make changes with policy in government,” she said. “It was such an unforgettable experience to go into the board room of the President of Peru and his cabinet members and discuss what we have found. It was life changing for me.”

Bejar similarly reflected on the ethical responsibility of environmental science. “Working in real-world field conditions reshaped how I think about research,” she said. “It’s not only about data collection, it’s about responsibility. Scientific research must be both rigorous and compassionate.”

While each student brought a different disciplinary focus, all three described the experience as transformative.



“WATER QUALITY IS NO LONGER
ABSTRACT... LIFE AND HEALTH ARE
DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO WATER.”

-CAROL BEJAR, TRACE METALS
RESEARCHER

“THE WORK HAS REAL POWER TO MAKE
A DIFFERENCE, AND LEARNING HOW TO
TEACH THAT WORK TO OTHERS: THAT’S
SOMETHING I’LL CARRY FORWARD.”

-STONE SMITH, MICROPLASTICS
RESEARCHER

Smith noted that the most valuable lesson was learning how to communicate science effectively. “Understanding that the work has real power to make a difference, and learning how to teach that work to others, that’s something I’ll carry forward,” he said. For Bejar, the project reinforced the human dimension of environmental research. “Water quality is no longer abstract,” she explained. “Life and health are directly connected to water, and that understanding has deepened my commitment to this work.”

Lee echoed that sentiment. “This trip has honestly changed my life,” she said. “I felt like I was doing some scrappy science that meant so much to the sweet, caring people who were helping us. I felt so fulfilled doing what I love and making a difference.”

As the Peru Water Research Project continues, the collaboration stands as a model for student-led international research rooted in partnership, sustainability, and shared purpose, demonstrating how science, when done together, can build lasting impact across borders.



DR. ROCKS, DR. CADET,
AND DR. BROOKS
RECEIVED THE
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
OF EDUCATION
MEDAL FOR THEIR
CONTRIBUTIONS TO
THE PROJECT.

PRESIDENT DR. LIDA ASENCIOS TRUJILLO

VISITS UVU

November 18–23, 2025

Utah Valley University was honored to receive a visit from President Dr. Lida Ascencios Trujillo of the Universidad Nacional de Educación (UNE), Peru. In addition to serving as President, Dr. Ascencios was recently elected as a Cabinet-level official in the Government of Peru, one of the highest academic leadership roles in the country. Dr. Ascencios has played a pivotal role in the success of UVU's UNESCO Chair project, Building Bridges: Collaborative Solutions for Water Sustainability Between Peru and Utah. Her relationships within the Peruvian Congress and the academic sector have opened doors, provided essential resources, and supported UVU researchers throughout the project. From organizing forums with the Congress of Peru to coordinating housing and laboratory support for visiting faculty and students, Dr. Ascencios has helped advance life-changing research and opportunities for both nations.

The purpose of her visit was to strengthen international collaboration, explore research partnerships, assess equipment needs for the Peru Water Project, learn about ongoing progress, and exchange best practices in higher education and scientific research. UVU expresses its gratitude for the support of SUNEDU, the UVU UNESCO Chair leadership, and especially Dr. Ascencios for her gracious visit.



MICROBIOLOGY RESEARCH AT UVU

Dr. Ascencios began her visit with a tour of Dr. Lauren Brooks’ microbiology classroom and laboratories. Dr. Brooks leads the microbiology component of the water project, specifically focusing on fecal contamination in Peruvian water sources. Dr. Ascencios met with UVU students, learned about their research, and expressed admiration for their expertise, dedication, and the extensive resources available within UVU’s state-of-the-art laboratories. Dr. Brooks also described the microbiological testing process used on water samples collected in Peru earlier this year, including the strengths and limitations of different methods and materials.



The tour concluded with a presentation of laboratory materials that UVU will donate to Peruvian research labs during the December visit. Dr. Ascencios shared heartfelt appreciation on behalf of her university and collaborators. Dr. Ascencios also met with Dr. Danny Horns, Dean of the College of Science, to discuss ongoing collaboration and to express mutual gratitude for the significant contributions of UVU faculty and students participating in the project.

TRACE METALS ANALYSIS, EQUIPMENT, AND PREPARATION

Later, Dr. Ascencios visited Dr. Eddy Cadet’s laboratory, where she observed the trace metals research being conducted on Peruvian water samples. Dr. Cadet, who leads the trace metals component, demonstrated analytical tools and testing processes. He and student researcher Carol Bejar Orellana, who will join the team in Peru in December, identified essential equipment that would enhance Peruvian laboratories, including the MARS6 Microwave Digester and Teflon tubes. That evening, Dr. Ascencios participated in a virtual coordination meeting with Peruvian researchers to finalize logistics for the upcoming fieldwork.



MICROPLASTICS RESEARCH LABS

Thursday marked Dr. Ascencios’ final day on the UVU campus. She visited Dr. Sally Rocks’ microplastics laboratory, where she viewed microplastic particulates from a water sample collected at her own university. Dr. Rocks, along with student researcher Stone Smith, who will also join the field team in December, demonstrated fluorescence techniques used to identify microplastics within complex samples.



A STRENGTHENED PARTNERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE

Her campus visit concluded with a special luncheon hosted by the UVU Provost team and academic deans, where Dr. Ascencios was formally recognized for her extraordinary support of the project. UVU UNESCO Chair Director Dr. Baldomero Lago highlighted the significance of her visit, noting that as Peru’s Superintendent of Education, “Dr. Ascencios is the highest-ranked government officer in academia to visit UVU. It is an honor to have her here with us today.” Dr. Ascencios then addressed UVU faculty, expressing gratitude and reinforcing the importance of the collaboration. “We have never seen a project like this in Peru and it is the most important one,” she shared.

“With these findings, we are able to improve the quality of life in Peru because of the contributions of UVU.”

Dr. Ascencios’ visit represents a significant milestone in the expanding partnership between UVU and Peru. Her leadership, vision, and steadfast commitment to advancing scientific and educational progress continue to shape the impact of the Peru Water Project. As UVU prepares for the next phase of research and international collaboration, the university is honored to work alongside Dr. Ascencios and its Peruvian partners in pursuing innovative, sustainable solutions that uplift communities. Her time on campus strengthened not only institutional ties, but also a shared belief that collaborative, student-centered research can transform lives, both in Peru and in Utah.

LIVING LANDSCAPES

SACRED FORESTS, TRADITION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE IN BENIN



Dr. Hilary Hungerford
Earth Science

This project explores how sacred forests, small but vital ecological and cultural sites, are being preserved amid climate change and development pressures. Led by Dr. Hilary Hungerford through the UVU UNESCO Chair on AI and Environmental Stewardship, the project combines geospatial mapping with community-based research to document how local traditions sustain biodiversity and cultural heritage. UVU students collaborate with Beninese leaders to map forests, record oral histories, and develop educational materials that connect Utah classrooms with global sustainability challenges.



SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS

13 CLIMATE ACTION	Target 13.3	Indicator 13.3.1
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	Target 4.7	Indicator 4.7.1
15 LIFE ON LAND	Target 12.4	Indicator 12.4.2
	Target 12.8	Indicator 12.8.1
6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	Target 6.1	Indicator 6.1.1
	Target 6.2	Indicator 6.2.1
	Target 6.b	Indicator 6.b.1

LIVING LANDSCAPES IN BENIN

**“SACRED FORESTS AND TREES
HOLD THEIR HISTORY AND
THEIR ANCESTORS... CUTTING
A SACRED TREE IS AKIN TO
ERASING THAT HISTORY.”**

SACRED FORESTS, TRADITION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

In June 2026, a team from Utah Valley University traveled to central Benin to begin fieldwork for Living Landscapes, a UNESCO Chair project studying how sacred forests survive in a landscape reshaped by farming, population growth, and climate change. The project pairs satellite mapping with village-level interviews across four communities, asking a deceptively simple question: why do some sacred forests endure while others disappear? The early answers, gathered by UVU students working alongside local leaders, point to something the team didn't fully expect going in. The fate of a forest has as much to do with who holds spiritual and political authority in a village as it does with soil, rainfall, or land pressure.





READING THE LAND FROM TWO DIRECTIONS

The project's strength lies in combining two very different ways of seeing the same landscape. Satellite imagery makes sacred forests visible at a glance: dense, structurally complex patches standing out sharply against the surrounding farmland. But the imagery alone can only show where forest has been lost, not why. That explanation comes from conversations with village elders, kings, and religious leaders who can speak to decisions made over generations. Bringing the two together turns a map of forest loss into a map of forest resilience, one that traces survival back to specific leaders, beliefs, and moments of political change. This fall, students will return to the satellite record and connect it directly to what they heard in the field, closing the loop between remote data and lived history.

ECOLOGICAL REFUGE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Comparing the four villages surfaced a clear pattern: leadership matters more than almost anything else. In one village that went without a king for a period of time, the forest was cut during that very gap in leadership. That same village also has several competing religious sects, in contrast to the single, unified religious authority found in the other communities. The lesson isn't simply that villages need a leader, it's that forests fare best where spiritual and political power are held together rather than split apart. Even where the wider forest has already been lost, individual sacred trees often remain fiercely protected. They mark burial sites, hold the memory of the village, or are understood as home to specific divinities. To fell one is not just to lose a tree; residents describe it as cutting down their own history.

WHAT THE ELDERS SAID

Interviews with village elders reinforced this connection between belief and land. Elders described traditional religion as very much alive, explaining that sacred forests and trees hold their history and their ancestors, and that cutting a sacred tree is akin to erasing that history. They also pointed to a pattern the team observed independently: when a village lacks a strong king, pressure on its forest increases. In these communities, political leadership and spiritual belief aren't separate systems; they reinforce each other, and weakening one weakens the other's ability to protect the land.





BUILDING SKILLS IN THE FIELD

For UVU students, the trip demanded skills no classroom fully prepares you for: collecting GPS data while simultaneously following a guide's account of a sacred forest's history, often without shared fluency in French or the local language, relying instead on careful observation and translated responses. That capacity to observe, ask questions, and listen without imposing outside assumptions is a form of cultural competency that only develops through sustained, everyday contact with a community. This fall, students will build on that experience by connecting what they heard on village walks to the satellite and GPS data collected alongside it.



WHY IT MATTERS

Perhaps the project's broadest lesson is that culture and religion shape environmental protection as powerfully as any policy or agency does. Forest conservation, this fieldwork suggests, isn't only the work of governments, but is sustained by social and cultural context, by belief systems that assign meaning and consequence to the land. The project also builds on relationships that stretch back to the lead faculty member's time as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Benin, and it has already produced new university partnerships that the team expects to sustain for years to come. That exchange is the point of the UNESCO Chair's work: UVU brings tools, training, and research capacity, and Beninese communities bring generations of knowledge about how belief sustains the land.

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC SERVICES

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC • CAMBODIA

INDONESIA • MOROCCO

EMS TRAINING PROJECT

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITY

La Universidad Católica Santo Domingo

UVU FACULTY AND STAFF LEADS



Steve Allred
EMS FACULTY



Kevin McCarthy
EMS Faculty



Jeannette Vargas German
Project Administrative
Assistant



SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	Target	10.2	Indicator	10.2.1
	Target	10.b	Indicator	10.b.1
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	Target	3.c	Indicator	3.c.1
	Target	3.d	Indicator	3.d.1
4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	Target	4.4	Indicator	4.4.1
	Target	4.7	Indicator	4.7.1

READY WHEN IT MATTERS:

EMS STUDENTS FIND PURPOSE AND PERSPECTIVE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

January, 2026

After four years of planning and partnership building, Utah Valley University's Dominican Republic EMS Project became a powerful learning experience that transformed classroom training into real-world impact. Developed in collaboration with Universidad Católica Santo Domingo (UCSD), local hospitals, and parish partners, the initiative focused on emergency medical services (EMS) education, community training, and cultural exchange. For the students who participated, the experience affirmed not only what they have learned, but who they are becoming as EMS professionals.

"I thought it was a unique opportunity because they have a different healthcare system in the Dominican Republic," said Donovan Bloom. "Being able to go and to lend some knowledge was a lot of fun because it gives us the opportunity to re-review the things we've been taught and then being able to teach that allowed us to re-solidify the things we were taught in class."

“ Just having that perspective of their healthcare system we can take things from what they do, and then they can take things from what we do, and then altogether just become better at what we do. **”**

-Allison Holmberg





“Being able to go and to lend some knowledge was a lot of fun because it gives us the opportunity to re-review the things we’ve been taught”

-Donovan Bloom

LEARNING BY TEACHING

Working alongside UCSD and the local parish, students stepped into educator roles, providing hands-on classes in airway management and bleeding control to a broad range of learners, from entry-level trainees to healthcare professionals. Teaching quickly became one of the most empowering parts of the experience.

“It was cool to see how grateful everybody was for the teaching because for us sometimes I think we take it for granted for all the awesome instructors we have at UVU,” Donovan reflected. “We kind of just assume that if anybody goes to EMT school or paramedic school that they’re going to have this knowledge, but it’s not that way. It was cool to be able to show a little bit of the hard work we put in.”

That level of preparation did not go unnoticed. Observing the students teach, faculty member Steve Allred emphasized the depth of their expertise: “These guys are all very smart. So when they mentioned that they were the teachers, they truly were, and the audience was as broad as you can imagine, from entry-level individuals all the way to physicians.” For the students, that recognition reinforced that their education had prepared them not just to participate, but to lead. Allison Holmberg described how stepping into that role initially felt unexpected. “We’re brand new paramedics. I don’t really feel like I’m in any position to teach,” she shared. “But it was really cool that everyone was so open to learning from us. And then I also learned a bunch from them. Just having that perspective of their healthcare system being so different from ours, we can take things from what they do, and then they can take things from what we do, and then altogether just become better at what we do.” Participants of the classes were awarded an official certification for the UVU UNESCO Chair upon completion of the course.



“The audience was as broad as you can imagine, from entry-level individuals all the way to physicians.”

**-Steve Allred
UVU FACULTY**

WHEN TRAINING BECAME REAL

Midway through the experience, the students encountered a moment that would stay with them long after the trip ended. “We ended up witnessing a traffic accident where a minibus had lost its brakes and plowed through a couple different cars and then ran over two people on a motorcycle,” Donovan recounted. “What are the chances that three kids in paramedic school happened to be in a place where we could render some aid?” Without hesitation, the students responded. “We were able to get the people who were trapped under the bus out from underneath the bus and do the best we could with just our hands,” he said. “We weren’t expecting to bust out the things we had learned in school, but we were grateful to be there. It was a rough experience, but we were grateful that we were there to help pull them out.”

For Braxton Zirker, the incident brought everything into focus. “This happened about seven days in, so we had a chance to see their hospital system and what their physicians were capable of, but we hadn’t yet gotten the chance to experience what their first responders did,” he explained. “It was very eye-opening to see through this experience just how different their first response system is.” “There were five or six police officers on scene right from the get-go, but we were the ones that actually pulled the lady and the other guy out from the bus,” Braxton said. “To actually see what’s going on firsthand, the different areas where we could teach classes in the future was very apparent. That was important experience to



“To be able to give back a little bit and help teach and help other people that are on a similar journey that was really beneficial”
-Braxton Zirker

go through.”

LOOKING FORWARD WITH PURPOSE

As the experience came to a close, students reflected on how deeply it shaped their future goals. “For so long up to this point, I’ve been the student,” Braxton shared. “So to be able to give back a little bit and help teach and help other people that are on a similar journey...that was really beneficial and something I hadn’t realized before. That’s something in the future that I’d like to pursue.”

“I can definitely re-solidify my desire to continue education and continue to learn,” Donovan added. “Everybody who was on the trip are firefighter EMTs or advanced EMTs, and we’re going to paramedic school to continue our education, obviously to be able to provide better care to the patients we respond to.”

For Allison, the experience reinforced the value of global perspective. “Continuing to travel and gain perspective will help my career,” she reflected. “We’re very privileged here, and that’s something we forget sometimes. It’s cool to go places where what we see is surprising to us and we have to really be grateful for what we do have.”

Through teaching, service, and real-world response, the Dominican Republic EMS Project empowered students



“What are the chances that three kids in paramedic school happened to be in a place where we could render some aid?”

-Donovan Bloom

EMS TRAINING PROJECT

MOROCCO

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Utah National Guard (UTANG)
Moroccan Civil Protection (CP)
Ministry of Health (MOH)

UVU EMS FACULTY LEADS



Steve Allred



Kevin McCarthy



Dexter Schiers

SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	Target	10.2	Indicator	10.2.1
	Target	10.b	Indicator	10.b.1
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	Target	3.c	Indicator	3.c.1
	Target	3.d	Indicator	3.d.1
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	Target	4.4	Indicator	4.4.1
	Target	4.7	Indicator	4.7.1



UVU EMS & MOROCCO PREHOSPITAL CARE TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

November 17, 2026

Utah Valley University’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) faculty are playing a central role in strengthening Morocco’s developing prehospital care system, thanks to a decades-long partnership between the Utah National Guard and the Kingdom of Morocco through the State Partnership Program. UVU’s involvement began in 2022 at the request of the Utah National Guard and the U.S. Embassy in Morocco. Since then, UVU EMS faculty have been working closely with the Moroccan Civil Protectorate, the nation’s primary emergency response agency, to train firefighters, nurses, and physicians in modern prehospital emergency care. The program not only equips participants with lifesaving clinical skills but also prepares them to serve as instructors, enabling Morocco to build its own sustainable and scalable emergency medical training infrastructure.

Kevin McCarthy, Chair of UVU’s EMS Department, has helped lead the initiative since its early stages. “This opportunity to train their firefighters, doctors, and nurses as providers and instructors allows Morocco to develop and advance its own prehospital care system,” McCarthy explained. “Their progress is still early, but the strides they’ve made will, without a doubt, have a generational impact on their country’s future.”



“The strides they’ve [Morocco] made will, without a doubt, have a generational impact on their country’s future.”

- Kevin McCarthy, UVU EMS Faculty



Recent training engagements in Casablanca included instructor certification courses and hands-on demonstrations with Moroccan emergency responders. UVU EMS faculty worked alongside leadership from the Civil Protectorate, including Col. Kaml Benyaich, Civil Protectorate Director; Col. Jamal Jazouli, Deputy Director; and Capt. Yassir Bouchti. Representatives from the Utah National Guard, including Lt. Col. Garry Wellish, also joined the collaboration. Graduation ceremonies at the Civil Protectorate highlighted the success of the latest cohort of emergency response instructor candidates.

Moroccan firefighters and medical personnel who will now train others throughout the country. UVU EMS Director Dexter Schiers and his team provided advanced scenario-based training, reinforcing clinical decision-making, teamwork, and instructional leadership.

The initiative reflects UVU’s ongoing commitment to global engagement, capacity building, and international collaboration. As Morocco continues developing its prehospital care system, UVU’s partnership, rooted in years of trust and shared purpose, continues to contribute to a safer, more resilient future for communities across the country.

(Right) - Demonstration ceremony at the Civil Protectorate, Casablanca, Morocco, (Bottom) - Lt. Col Garry Wellish (Utah National Guard), Kevin McCarthy and a new Moroccan Firefighter instructor receiving training.



PUBLIC HEALTH AND NURSING COLLABORATION

CAMBODIA



SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	Target	6.1	Indicator	6.1.1
	Target	6.2	Indicator	6.2.1
	Target	6.b	Indicator	6.b.1
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	Target	3.9	Indicator	3.9.2
	Target	11.1	Indicator	11.1.1
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	Target	11.1	Indicator	11.1.1

UVU FACULTY LEADS



*Alexis Geist
Public Health*



*Sharon Mann
Nursing*

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION

Angkor Hospital for Children



EMPOWERING GLOBAL COMMUNITIES



A PUBLIC HEALTH,
AND NURSING
COLLABORATION
WITH ANGKOR HOSPITAL
FOR CHILDREN IN



CAMBODIA

“THIS IS WHAT THE
CAMBODIA PROJECT IS
ALL ABOUT... WORKING
TOGETHER PROVIDES
MORE OPPORTUNITIES
FOR STUDENTS TO
EXPERIENCE THE VALUE
OF TEAMWORK AND
COLLABORATION.”

- ALEXIS GEIST

This summer, students from Utah Valley University's College of Health and Public Service (CHPS) travel to Cambodia to work alongside Angkor Hospital for Children (AHC), a partnership formalized by an MOU between the two institutions. Nursing, EMS, and Public Health students each contribute through their own discipline, joining AHC's staff to serve children and families in Phnom Penh and the surrounding rural communities.

This year's trip, led by Public Health faculty member Alexis Geist and Nursing faculty member Sharon Mann, gave students a firsthand look at community-centered global health work, and left a lasting impression on everyone involved.



UNIFORMS, AND THE COST OF AN EDUCATION

Since 2019, nursing students have run a school uniform initiative before each trip, collecting donations to cover a cost that can otherwise keep a Cambodian child out of school entirely: about \$7 per uniform. This year they raised over \$800, enough to donate more than 100 uniforms at a rural school outside Phnom Penh. After meeting with local officials and school administrators, the group delivered the uniforms and taught a hand hygiene lesson through translators, while Geist spoke with the community about the importance of education. The response was overwhelming. Mann called the children’s and staff’s gratitude “deeply moving,” and the local governor came in person to thank the group. Geist, too, remembered the community as “so warm and so thankful for the school uniforms” , and found herself wondering what it meant to the girls at the school that every visiting UVU student was female. Both faculty agreed: it was one of the most meaningful days of the trip.



A BROADER VIEW OF COMMUNITY HEALTH

On another day, the group joined AHC’s community outreach team on visits to two rural primary schools, one for hand hygiene, dental care, and nutrition lessons, the other for HIV education aimed at ten- to twelve-year-olds, followed by a religious community outreach event and a home visit to support a child recovering from malnutrition. That home visit stood out to Mann as a window into AHC’s approach to care: following up with families in their own environment, reinforcing education, and catching problems early before they mean a hospital readmission. For Geist, the day captured the full spirit of the project as students from every CHPS discipline engaged through their own specialty while experiencing global service together. “This is what the Cambodia project is all about,” she said.

TEACHING THE TEACHERS: BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY

AHC had asked UVU specifically for help strengthening nursing research and evidence-based practice among its staff. Nursing students Angie and Lauren, drawing on a research course they were taking, built and delivered a lecture on research fundamentals to AHC nurses and physicians. The room was rapt. Notes filled notebooks, slides were photographed, questions kept coming , and the hospital invited them back to present a second time before the group left.



“WE ARE
GOING
TO BE THE
ONES!”

“IT FELT
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TRULY
WITNESSING
HISTORY
TAKE
PLACE.”

UVU
STUDENT,
JESSI



A related session on manuscript writing left a lasting mark on student Jessi. While demonstrating how to search academic databases, presenters used the group’s own in-progress study on pediatric medication errors in Cambodia as an example , and found no existing articles on the topic at all. One Cambodian nurse broke the silence: “We’re going to be the one!” Jessi described the room lighting up: “It felt like I was truly witnessing history take place.”

IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, AND THE PICU

Mann also recalled watching students Angie and Sam assist with a severe wound case in the ED. Angie, a wound care nurse pursuing her BSN, brought real clinical expertise to the case, while both students stayed bedside offering comfort through a painful procedure, connecting with the patient, Mann said, “through their presence, empathy, and genuine concern” despite the language barrier.



One PICU patient left an even deeper impression: a child admitted with severe dengue fever that progressed to septic shock, kidney failure, and the need for mechanical ventilation. The AHC team managed his care skillfully, treating his kidney failure with peritoneal dialysis and extubating him successfully on the group’s final day. His case also revealed a chance to strengthen fluid management protocols, the aggressive resuscitation that treated his shock contributed to severe swelling and compartment syndrome in his arm, requiring surgery. Mann and the students shared these observations with AHC’s nursing leadership, who welcomed the discussion. “This demonstrated the value of reciprocal collaboration,” she said, “where the shared exchange of knowledge can lead to meaningful improvements in patient care.”

SKILLS THAT WILL SET THEM APART

Mann pointed to a shift in perspective as one of the trip’s most valuable lessons: Cambodian providers’ emphasis on prevention and education over treatment alone, and their resourcefulness with limited technology , developing strong peripheral IV skills in place of central lines, managing kidney failure through peritoneal dialysis instead of hemodialysis. These experiences, she said, reinforced that great patient care depends on clinical judgment and adaptability as much as advanced equipment, lessons she believes will make students more compassionate and resourceful throughout their careers. Nursing student Sam summed up what many took from the trip: “What I learned from the trip was the value in learning

from anyone and everyone... They are very accepting, resilient, and want to be as self-sustaining as possible... Their community came together during a horrific time and has created such an incredible place with wonderful goals.”

LOOKING AHEAD

The MOU between UVU and AHC, established last year, was strengthened further by this trip. Mann sees the partnership as an ongoing exchange rather than a one-time experience, envisioning future cohorts helping build a sustainable nursing research curriculum with AHC. Geist, meanwhile, credited the collaboration for a new milestone: beginning in

June 2027, UVU and AHC will launch an early childhood special education program at the hospital, a project she toured in person while meeting AHC’s CEO, Dr. Pheaktra.

For both faculty leads, the partnership’s value lies in its reciprocity, Cambodian nurses and UVU students learning from one another, not a one-sided service trip. As the project grows into something genuinely multidisciplinary, moments like Sam’s capture what keeps drawing UVU students back to Cambodia: the chance to serve alongside a community, learn from it, and build something lasting together.

“I BELIEVE THIS BROADER UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTHCARE WILL MAKE THEM MORE COMPASSIONATE, CULTURALLY AWARE, RESOURCEFUL, AND EFFECTIVE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREERS.”

- SHARON MANN

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY AND SOCIAL WORK COLLABORATION

INDONESIA

SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	Target	3.8	Indicator	3.8.1
	Target	3.c	Indicator	3.c.1
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	Target	10.2	Indicator	10.2.1
	Target	10.3	Indicator	10.3.1
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	Target	4.5	Indicator	4.5.1
	Target	4.4	Indicator	4.4.1

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana
STIKES Bethesda Health Sciences University
UCP Roda Untuk Kemanusiaan



UVU FACULTY LEAD



Dr. Lynn Farley
Occupational Therapy



Prof. Kristin Lambert
Social Work

BEYOND THE CLINIC INDONESIA

HOW COLLABORATIVE WORK IMPACTED OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY AND SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS



MANY MOMENTS, ONE MISSION

In a home outside Yogyakarta, Indonesia, an 85-year-old man named Mr. S sat with a group of Utah Valley University students who had traveled more than 9,000 miles to meet him. “Even though there was a language barrier during our assessment, he looked directly at us,” recalled Ashley, one of the UVU students on the trip. “Mr. S stood out to me because he was so kind and willing to share his life with us. He wanted to show us his home and understand his routine...The experience with him will stay in my heart forever,”

THAT HOME VISIT IS ONE SMALL SCENE FROM A MUCH LARGER INITIATIVE: Global Learning and Collaborative Care in Indonesia, a project under UVU’s UNESCO Chair on AI and Environmental Stewardship for Sustainable Futures, led by Dr. Lynn Farley of the Occupational Therapy Assistant program alongside colleague Kristin Lambert of the Master of Social Work program.



“THESE ARE SKILLS THAT
I AM FOR SURE GOING TO
TAKE WITH ME WHEN I
COME HOME... I WILL BE
ABLE TO MEET MY PATIENT

WHERE THEY ARE AT” - Alexa, UVU Student

A GLOBAL CLASSROOM

The program is built as a three week hybrid experience. The first two weeks unfold entirely online, as students from UVU, Indonesia, and Hong Kong work through shared coursework on cultural humility, global health systems, interprofessional collaboration, and ethical community engagement. Then comes week three: an immersive, in-person residency in Yogyakarta, where students from Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Psychology, Physiotherapy, Nutrition, Occupational Therapy, and Social Work step out of the online classroom and into each other’s company for the first time, and into the community they came to learn from.

UVU partnered with Stikes Bethesda Yakkum, Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana (UKDW) in Yogyakarta, and Hong Kong University’s nursing program to build the exchange, with UKDW’s medical faculty framing this year’s in-country coursework around a fitting theme: comprehensive, interprofessional geriatric care. Ten UVU students made the trip, five from Occupational Therapy Assistant and five from Master of Social Work, landing in a country where the realities of aging, disability, and caregiving look nothing like they do at home. That contrast was the point.

“In the US we have more access, equipment, and resources to help with disabilities,” said student Gloria. “However, here the family support is so strong. They take care of the financial, physical, and emotional needs of older adults.



I learned that we need to learn to honor and respect other cultures better... to adapt to another culture rather than comparing to the U.S.”

LESSONS OF CARE AND COLLABORATION

Much of the in-country week centered on hands-on work: home visits, community health assessments, and collaborative case-building with students from other disciplines and countries. For Taylor, one afternoon spent working alongside peers to build a case study captured the whole point of the program. “It was real-life, hands-on stuff that us in America may never have a chance of doing again,” Taylor said. For Riann, it was a lesson caregiving from a woman who framed her own health not as a personal goal, but as an act of love. “She explained how she wants to stay healthy not only for herself but for her husband,” Riann said.



“She is his primary caregiver, and she said her life will always be full and she is so happy because she gets to care for and love him every day.”

Working across disciplines and cultures at the same time turned out to be its own kind of curriculum. “Working with other disciplines on a team with a unified goal has been helpful for me to see the importance of that kind of work, especially when it comes to geriatric care,” said Brittny. “It was combining multiple complex issues and making it personal and giving me hands-on experience. I also loved working with people from other cultures to see how different resources and people conceptualize and work through problems.”

Mary, a social work student, pointed to a small but deliberate design choice behind that collaboration: the program split students into randomized groups rather than letting them cluster with people they already knew. “It was a good experience for learning how to work interprofessionally and get better at using resources from others and seeing other perspectives.”

Alexa put a name to the shift she felt in herself over three weeks: awareness. “I have learned how to be more aware of others and their needs,” she said. “It’s been extremely eye-opening to see how kind, generous, thoughtful, and understanding everyone is here. These are skills that I am for sure going to take with me when I come home... I also feel that I am more patient and understanding because of coming to Indonesia, which will set me apart from other OTs because I will be able to meet my patient where they are at and guide them to where they want to go.”



COMING BACK TO CHECK IN

Part of what made this year’s trip different was that it wasn’t the team’s first visit. A year earlier, UVU had partnered with UCP Roda Untuk Kemanusiaan, Stikes Bethesda Health Sciences University, and UKDW on a two-day workshop in Wonosobo, training more than 160 caregivers in feeding, positioning, dressing, and rehabilitation techniques for children with cerebral palsy, and sending families home with exercise kits to continue the work on their own.

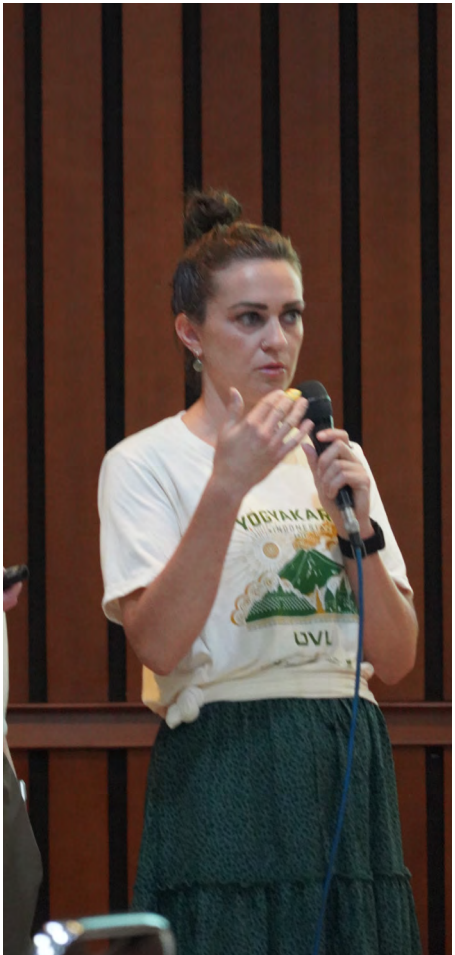
This year, Dr. Farley returned to some of those same families to see how the children were doing months later. The outcome was a real-world applied case stuy for students to see how effective the exercises were long term with the support of the children’s dedicated caregivers.



BRINGING IT HOME

Farley’s goal for the experience was to send students back to Utah changed, not just well-traveled. Watching them move through the three weeks, she said the transformation was visible in real time.

That growth is, by design, meant to circle back to Utah. As Utah’s own communities grow more diverse, UVU’s health and human service programs believe that the intercultural competence and interprofessional collaboration these students built in Yogyakarta sitting with families, working across disciplines, adapting rather than assuming, will show up in how they treat patients in Provo, in rural Utah, in the state’s underserved communities for years to come. The project is laying groundwork for a longer-term partnership: one built less on delivering aid from afar and more on the kind of reciprocal, sustained relationship captured in a home visit with a man named Mr. S, who welcomed a group of strangers into his life and, in doing so, taught them more about care than any textbook could.



SMITH COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

PHILIPPINES • GREECE

ADVANCING AI EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PHILIPPINES

UVU FACULTY LEADS



Dr. Carl Canlas
Information Systems and Technology



Dr. Kelsey Hixson-Bowles
English and Literature



Dr. Yi Yin
Social and Behavioral Sciences



SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS

PARTICIPATING UNIVERSITIES & PARTNERS

*Far Eastern University - Institute of Technology
and Polytechnic University of the Philippines*

*De La Salle University - College of
Saint Benilde*

Tahanan Walang Hagdan TWHI

ISACA Manila

Institute of Internal Auditors - Philippines

4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	Target	4.4	Indicator	4.4.1
	Target	4.7	Indicator	4.7.1
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	Target	8.6	Indicator	8.6.1
	Target	8.5	Indicator	8.5.1
9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	Target	9.5	Indicator	9.5.1
	Target	9.c	Indicator	9.5.2
	Target	9.c	Indicator	9.c.1



MAY 2026

UVU faculty and students connect with Philippine universities, military leaders, and a disability nonprofit to advance ethical AI, cybersecurity, and inclusive innovation.

“THE WONDERFUL THING ABOUT THIS MOMENT IS THAT STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY ARE ALL BEGINNERS AND HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN TOGETHER ABOUT AI AND HOW TO USE IT IN A APPROPRIATE, EFFICIENT, AND ETHICAL WAY” - Dr. Kelsey Hixsom- bowles

At the beginning of May, UVU faculty and students from Information Systems and English traveled to the Philippines to advance the “Advancing AI Education, Research, and Professional Development” project. The group gave lectures at several partner institutions, De La Salle University’s College of Saint Benilde, Far Eastern University, and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, with a focus on the ethical use of AI and cybersecurity. The delegation was also invited to speak at the Army Military Operations headquarters, and visited Tahanan Walang Hagdanan, a nonprofit serving the disability community, to help strengthen its cybersecurity practices. From university lecture halls to a nonprofit’s donation platform, the trip reflected the UNESCO Chair’s mission of sustainable action through AI education.

WHY THIS PARTNERSHIP MATTERS

Ethical AI and cybersecurity are global challenges that no single institution can solve alone. As Carl Canlas, Information Systems and Technology, put it, “partnering with universities in the Philippines allowed us to address global challenges that transcend national borders.” Such collaboration builds local capacity and shared expertise while helping ensure emerging technologies are developed and used responsibly.

Kelsey Hixson-Bowles, Assistant Professor of English & Literature, sees the same value from an educational angle. “We share common challenges but have different perspectives on how to address those challenges,” she said, and it’s that exchange of ideas that pushes both sides toward more innovative approaches to ethical AI.

AI LITERACY AND CYBERSECURITY WITH A

HUMAN PURPOSE

•PHILIPPINES•



TEACHING THAT MEETS PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

Rather than lecturing on theory, the team grounded its sessions in practical, real-world examples about how AI ethics and cybersecurity play out in education, government, business, and everyday decisions within the Filipino context.

Hixson-Bowles took a similarly grounded approach through an educational lens. Aware that many Philippine institutions are working to build critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills into their education systems, she anchored her lecture on ethical AI in education scholars Paulo Freire and bell hooks, pushing faculty, staff, and students to keep their core values and the broader purpose of education front and center as they think about integrating AI.

The team's engagement didn't end when the lectures did. At each university, they launched a survey to learn what faculty, staff, and students want to focus on in future workshops. This data is now being synthesized with what the team observed in person to build more customized programming for each school going forward.

A STRATEGIC CONVERSATION AT ARMY MILITARY OPERATIONS HEADQUARTERS

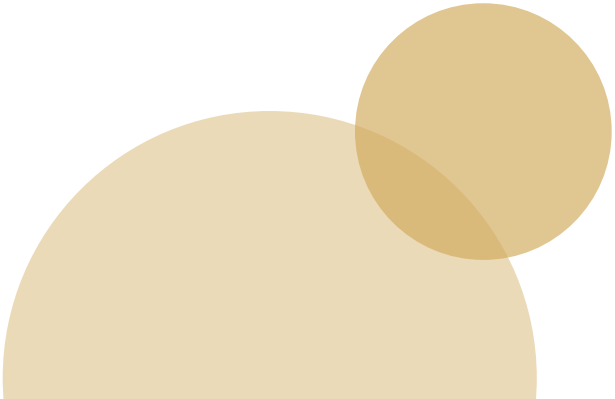
One of the most significant moments of the trip was an invitation to present at the Army Military Operations headquarters. For Canlas, the invitation carried weight beyond the honor itself: "it demonstrated the growing recognition that ethical AI and cybersecurity are critical strategic issues, not just academic topics." Engaging with military leaders, he added, "highlighted how responsible technology use is essential for national security, public trust, and informed decision-making."

Hixson-Bowles saw that reality play out directly in the room. "It was clear that they are in the trenches when it comes to how AI is both helping and complicating their work," she said. Because their rescue missions depend on accurate information delivered quickly, she noted that "having accurate information in a timely manner is a matter of life and death", which is why concerns about AI accuracy and the risk of misinformation, even disinformation, were top of mind throughout the discussion. At the same time, she found the group genuinely open to how AI tools might improve their work, and came away feeling "we were able to contribute meaningful context and information to help a group working to save lives."

TAHANAN WALANG HAGDANAN: SECURITY WORK WITH A HUMAN PURPOSE

The trip's final major stop carried a different kind of weight. Tahanan Walang Hagdanan ("home with no stairs"), a nonprofit under the Philippines' National Council on Disability Affairs, empowers individuals with disabilities, including many wheelchair users, but had been targeted by security breaches on its donation platform, leaving it vulnerable to illegal solicitation and fraudulent giving pages. UVU's team stepped in not just to fix the immediate problems, but to train the organization's IT staff so they can sustain those defenses going forward.

For Canlas, the value of that work extends well beyond the technical fix. "Working with Tahanan Walang Hagdanan was especially rewarding because the project focused on empowering individuals with disabilities through technology and education," he said, adding that he hopes the collaboration produces lasting gains in accessibility, digital inclusion, and long-term social and economic empowerment for the community TWHI serves.



LOOKING AHEAD

The trip laid the groundwork for deeper student involvement, with students in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences set to join the project as data collection wraps up, helping with analyzing data, writing reports, developing recommendations, and collaborating directly with international partners on AI literacy education, including through the hands-on work with Tahanan Walang Hagdanan. That kind of engagement is what Hixson-Bowles sees as central to the UNESCO Chair’s broader mission: “students, staff, and faculty are all beginners and have the opportunity to learn together about AI and how to use it in appropriate, efficient, and ethical ways.” Canlas frames the same idea in terms of impact, describing the project as a catalyst for sustainable development that connects learning with service, accessibility, and social responsibility. Both see this as the beginning of something lasting. “I sincerely hope that both UVU and our partners in the Philippines grow as a result of these projects,” Hixson-Bowles said. Canlas, reflecting on the partnership’s future, agreed: “meaningful innovation begins with listening, understanding community needs, and building relationships based on mutual respect and shared goals.”



“MEANINGFUL INNOVATION BEGINS WITH LISTENING, UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY NEEDS, AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BASED ON MUTUAL RESPECT AND SHARED GOALS.” - Dr. Carl Canlas

CAPTURING THE AGIOS ACHILIOS OF PENTALOFOS GREECE

UVU FACULTY LEADS



Dr. Alik Milioti
Architecture



Prof. Michael Harper
Digital Media

SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS



Capturing the Agios Achilios of Pentalofos is an interdisciplinary heritage documentation project led by Utah Valley University’s Architecture and Digital Media programs in collaboration with local partners in Pentalofos, Greece. The project combines traditional architectural surveying with advanced technologies, including LiDAR scanning, photogrammetry, and extended reality (XR), to digitally document and interpret the historic church of Agios Achilios.

CAPTURING THE AGIOS ACHILIOS OF PENTALOFOS

UVU DIGITAL MEDIA AND ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS WORK ON UNESCO SITE IN GREECE

January 14-25, 2026

A team of Utah Valley University faculty and students traveled to the remote mountain village of Pentalofos, Greece, to carry out an intensive cultural-preservation project focused on Agios Achilios, a centuries-old Byzantine chapel at risk of further deterioration. What began as a spontaneous stop during a previous UVU visit became a major project. The conservation and documentation efforts drew the attention of UNESCO, which requested formal documentation of the site before additional damage could occur.

The 2026 research visit was led by Dr. Aliki Milioti of UVU's Architecture Program and Michael Harper from Digital Media, alongside digital media students Michael Bailey, Reese Nelson, and Robert Lewis, and architecture student Will Newby. The team documented Agios Achilios and several other historic sites across northern and central Greece using a combination of advanced digital technologies and traditional architectural methods.

At Agios Achilios, the digital media team employed drone flights, LiDAR scanning, high-resolution photography, and detailed fresco imagery capture. Each day required adaptability and problem-solving in the field. For Robert Lewis, the experience reinforced the value of hands-on learning: "There are some things that you just can't learn unless you experience it for yourself." Encountering unforeseen challenges, he explained, meant that "you develop the skills needed to overcome these problems, and learn how to troubleshoot while also moving forward." Reflecting on the cultural impact of the work, Lewis added, "The people there were full of excitement and gratitude as we worked hard to preserve hundreds of years of their culture."



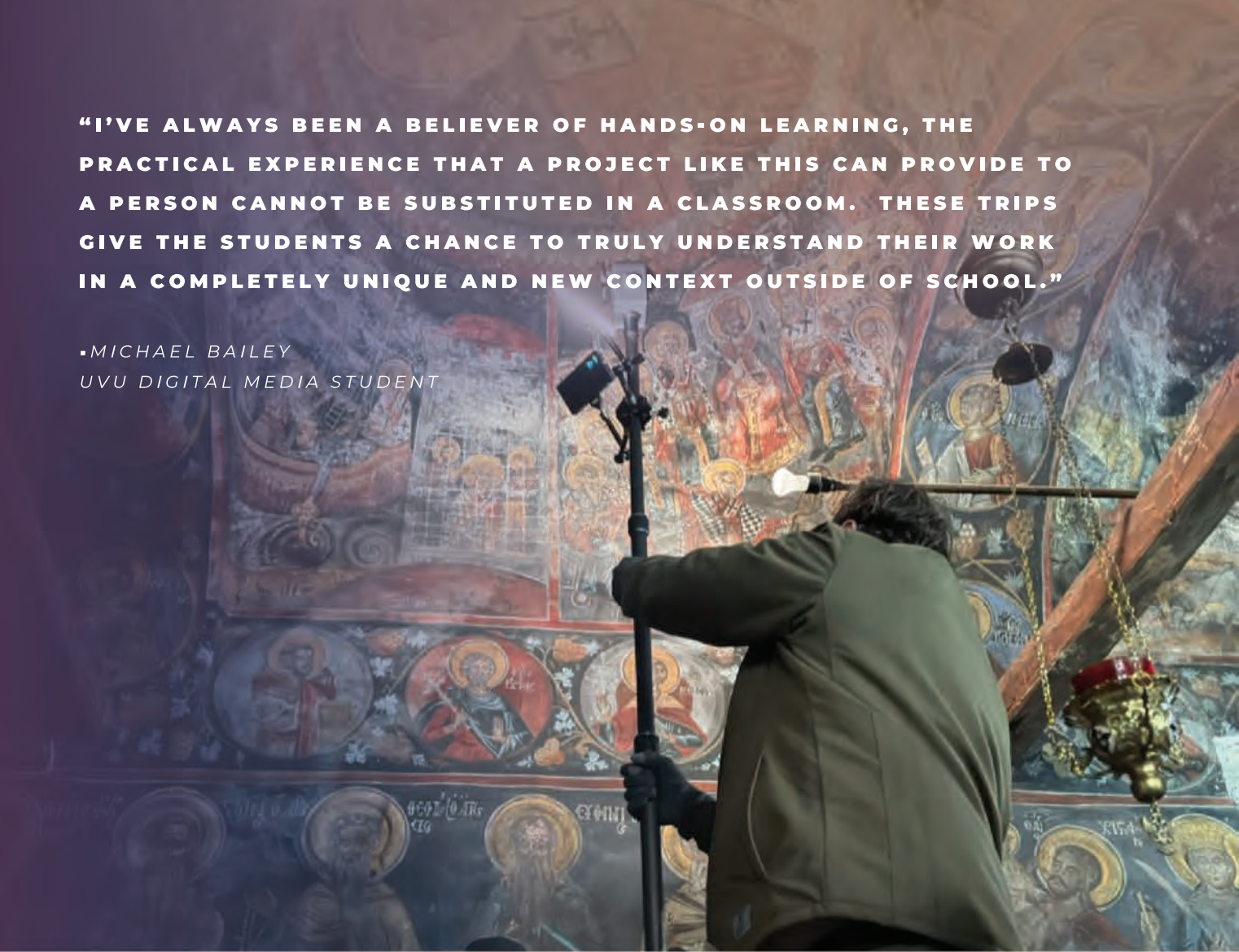
DIGITAL IMAGING IN ACTION: HANDS-ON PRESERVATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Michael Bailey approached the project as his senior capstone, gaining real-world experience with LiDAR technology in an international preservation setting. “Having the opportunity to travel to another country and learn even small or specific things about another culture and/or country is incredibly enriching to my perspective and experience as a student,” he said. He emphasized that “the practical experience that a project like this can provide to a person cannot be substituted in a classroom.” Learning about the stonemasonry traditions of Pentalofos, Bailey noted, “I learned some of the history of the stonemasonry of Pentalofos and what it means to Greece as a country and its cultural heritage.”

Reese Nelson worked with advanced imaging tools, including the X-Grid camera, in challenging indoor environments that demanded constant technical adjustment. She reflected, “Being part of the Agios Achilios project has expanded my educational experience far beyond what I normally encounter in the classroom.” Applying her skills in the field reshaped her understanding of hands-on learning: “At the university, we practice with technology in controlled environments, but applying that knowledge to a real project in another country is entirely different.” She also emphasized the importance of adaptability, noting that “no matter how much you prepare, real-world fieldwork always brings unexpected challenges.”

“I’VE ALWAYS BEEN A BELIEVER OF HANDS-ON LEARNING, THE PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE THAT A PROJECT LIKE THIS CAN PROVIDE TO A PERSON CANNOT BE SUBSTITUTED IN A CLASSROOM. THESE TRIPS GIVE THE STUDENTS A CHANCE TO TRULY UNDERSTAND THEIR WORK IN A COMPLETELY UNIQUE AND NEW CONTEXT OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL.”

•MICHAEL BAILEY
UVU DIGITAL MEDIA STUDENT



“THERE IS SO MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT A CULTURE, A PLACE, A PEOPLE, AND THEIR ARCHITECTURE WHEN YOU ACTUALLY HAVE YOUR BOOTS ON THE GROUND.”

• WILL NEWBY,
UVU ARCHITECTURE STUDENT



CLASSICAL MEETS CONTEMPORARY: REVIVING HISTORIC TECHNOLOGY

While the digital media team focused on advanced scanning and imaging, architecture student Will Newby worked closely with Dr. Milioti to apply classic architecture documentation techniques. Using hand tools, sketching materials, and triangulation methods, they recorded architectural details such as stone patterns, proportions, curvatures, and structural systems, that digital tools alone cannot fully capture. For Newby, the experience reshaped his view of the profession. “This project expanded my understanding of what an architect can do,” he said. “Being in the place and on the site provided incredible learning that you can’t get sitting in an office.” Reflecting on the cultural and personal impact of the work, Newby emphasized, “Nothing can replace being in the place with the people.” The team also documented additional historic sites, including the Agia Triada chapel, the Church of Saint John in Lagkadia, the Church of the Holy Apostles, the Blossoming Stones House, and the Church of Saint Constantine, expanding the project’s scope and reinforcing the interconnectedness of Greece’s architectural heritage.

Working alongside the Digital Media team demonstrated the power of interdisciplinary collaboration. Hand-drawn measurements helped verify LiDAR data, while 3D scans provided broader spatial relationships that strengthened the accuracy of the drawings. Combining these approaches created a more complete and trustworthy record of the chapel that was both technically precise and deeply informed by physical experience.



UNESCO RECOGNITION:

A LONG-LASTING IMPACT

Just before departing for Greece, the project received formal UNESCO recognition, elevating the work from an academic exercise to a professional responsibility. Lewis described the designation as bringing “a sense of professionalism, responsibility, and accountability,” while Nelson noted that “it reinforced that this wasn’t just a student project.” For Bailey, “the added prestige and pressure of the UNESCO label was welcomed and motivates me to deliver great results.”

As the team returned home, the extensive LiDAR scans, photographs, drone imagery, drawings, and architectural analyses collected will continue to inform research, student projects, and UVU curriculum. More importantly, the project created a permanent digital and architectural record of Agios Achilios and other vulnerable sites, helping ensure that these cultural treasures endure. In preserving Agios Achilios, students gained an education that could only happen in the field, while leaving behind a record that will protect the site long after the project ended.



BLOSSOMING STONES CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP

GREECE

UVU FACULTY LEADS



Dr. Aliki Milioti
Architecture



Prof. Michael Harper
Digital Media



Prof. Paul Monson
Architecture

SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS



Target 11.4 Indicator 11.a

Target 4.4 Indicator 4.7

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION

Blossoming Stones Civil Society

BLOSSOMING STONES

Where Ancient Craft Meets a New Generation of Architects



In the mountain village of Lagadia, Arcadia, a centuries-old tradition is being kept alive one carefully placed stone at a time. This summer, the Greek non-profit Ανθη της Πέτρας, or “Blossoming Stones,” hosted its 8th annual Stonemasonry Workshop, drawing master craftsmen, students, and international scholars together for a nine-day immersion in the Lagkadini stone-building tradition, a practice recognized on Greece’s National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2017.

For the students of Utah Valley University’s Architecture program, the trip was more than an academic exercise. It was a return to the roots of their discipline.

**NINE DAYS, THREE SITES,
ONE LIVING TRADITION**

Running from July 26 to August 2, the workshop, officially titled “Stone Festivities 2026: 8th Stonemasonry Workshop & International Conference,” combined hands-on labor with scholarly exchange. Each morning, participants split into three parallel restoration teams working on a watermill, a cobblestone path, and a ruined house, learning dry-stone techniques directly from master masons like Panos Giokas, Stathis Kagioulis, and Kostas Karalolos.

Evenings turned toward dialogue. A midweek session, held in partnership with the Greek Ministry of Culture’s Directorate of Intangible Heritage, spotlighted the UVU collaboration specifically, featuring UNESCO chair holder Baldomero Lago, architecture professor Alikí Milioti, and Paul Monson, and digital studies professor Michael Harper, who presented on “Educating the Architects in Traditional Architecture of Stone.” Later sessions tackled everything from the geology behind Lagadia’s stone to vocational training models for stonemasonry schools across Europe, with speakers from Sweden, Italy, and Albania joining the conversation.



FROM APPRENTICES TO STEWARDS

For UVU students, the workshop offered something no lecture hall could replicate. Architecture student Samuel Zenteno reflected on the privilege of learning from master stonemasons whose work carries centuries of accumulated knowledge, calling architecture “a living expression of the human experience,” shaped as much by heritage and dedication as by design, and one that “fosters meaningful relationships across generations.”



That hands-on immersion carried directly into the conference itself, where UVU students didn't just observe international scholarship. They contributed to it. Will Newby presented alongside digital media professor Michael Harper on "Capturing the Agios Achilios of Pentalofos," pairing Harper's LiDAR scans and digital modeling with his own hand-drawn measurements and renderings from the site, a project that put the workshop's whole ethos, old technique alongside new tools, directly in front of an international audience.

For Newby, the experience reinforced something the classroom never could: "the power of place and of having your boots on the ground and knees in the dirt." Standing before scholars and practitioners from across the world, he described himself as "learning to become a steward of historic buildings and a champion of preserving culture in the built and natural environment," a role few undergraduates get to step into so directly.

Layla Ford shared the stage with Dr. Alikli Milioti to present "The Historic Dimitsana Clock Tower: Reconstructing the Transatlantic Mobility of Architecture, Technology, and Craftsmanship," drawn from fieldwork in the nearby village of Dimitsana. It was research substantial enough to hold its own on a conference program alongside established faculty and international presenters.

For Ford, the opportunity reframed what architecture could mean: not just

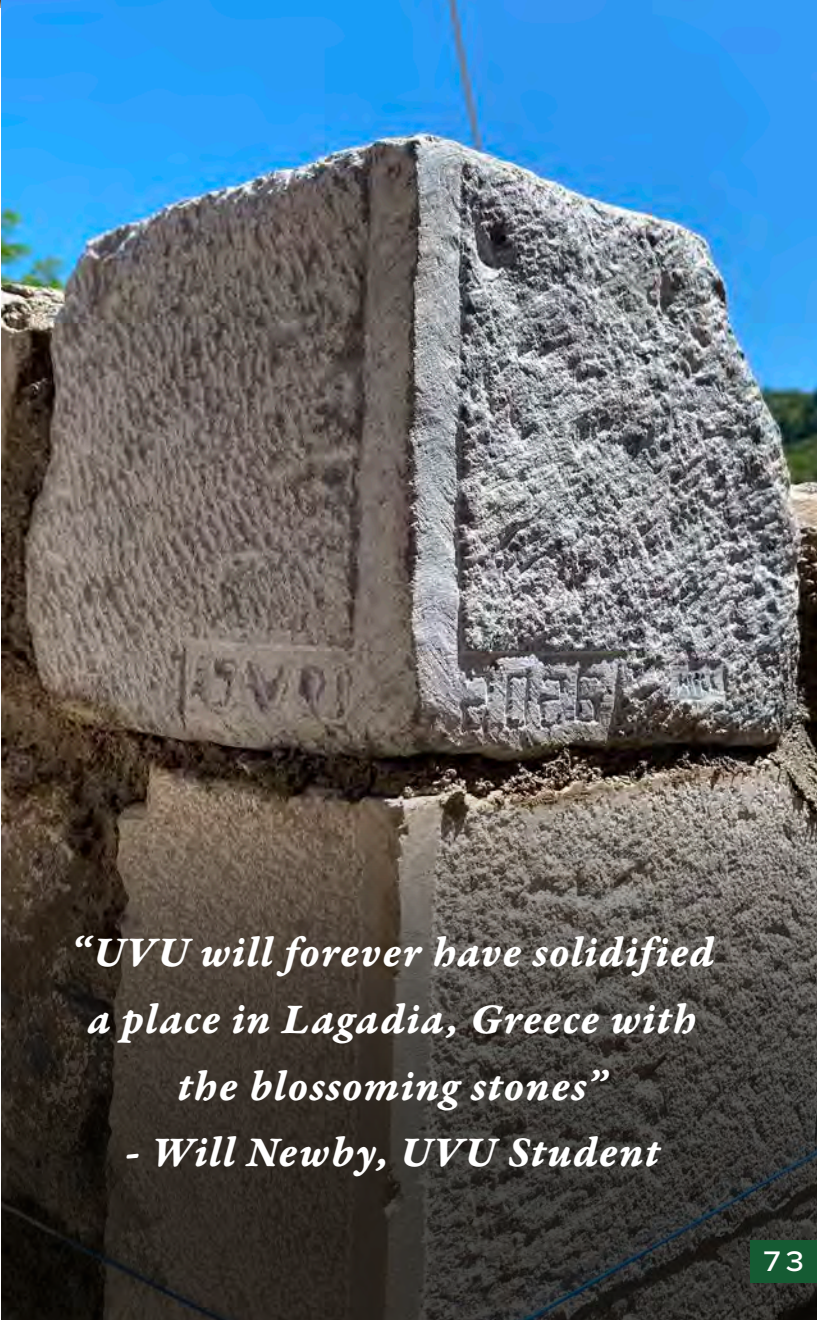


“I am incredibly grateful to have been part of a project that changed my life.” - Layla Ford, UVU Student

A LEGACY LAID STONE BY STONE

The workshop closed on August 2 with a graduation ceremony awarding certificates of participation, followed by the announcement of the 9th Stonemasonry Workshop, planned for July 2027. For the students who made the trip, the closing ceremony marked the end of a workshop. But, as Ford put it, it also marked the beginning of a deepened “passion for creating architecture that leaves a lasting legacy.”

design and history, but “preserving history, strengthening communities, and connecting generations through stories that deserve to be remembered and protected.” She spoke of being “entrusted with even a small role in a story that will continue to inspire and unite communities,” an experience she said “deepened my passion for creating architecture that leaves a lasting legacy.”



“UVU will forever have solidified a place in Lagadia, Greece with the blossoming stones” - Will Newby, UVU Student

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

ENTREPRENEURIAL SPANISH PROJECT

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS

UVU FACULTY LEAD



Mari de Dios
Languages and Cultures

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Centro Zonal de Pastoral Social



Target **4** Indicator **4c.1**

Target **8.9** Indicator **8.9.1**

Target **11.4** Indicator **11.4.1**

FROM CLASSROOM

UVU STUDENTS BRING ENTREPRENEURSHIP
EDUCATION TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

TO COMMUNITY



April 8-12, 2026

In the Dominican town of Bayaguana, many aspiring entrepreneurs have no shortage of drive, but they've lacked access to structured business training and the kind of applied mentorship that turns a good idea into a working plan. The *Aprender y Emprender* ("Learn and Undertake") initiative set out to change that, connecting Utah Valley University students and faculty with local learners eager to build income-generating opportunities for themselves and their community.

The program grew out of a partnership between UVU's UNESCO Chair, the SPAN 3200 Spanish course, CEZOPAS in Bayaguana, and UVU's College of Humanities and Social Sciences. For six weeks, UVU students taught more than 100 Bayaguana participants the fundamentals of entrepreneurship: setting SMART goals, identifying resources,

understanding supply and demand, navigating loans, and using social media for marketing.

That virtual coursework laid a shared foundation, one the group would soon put into practice together in person.

ON THE GROUND IN BAYAGUANA

From April 8–12, 2026, UVU students traveled to Bayaguana to deliver certificates of completion to more than 100 participants and reconnect with the community they had spent weeks teaching remotely. On the ground, they led review sessions and offered one-on-one follow-up lessons, helping participants apply what they'd learned to their own business ideas. Beyond the formal instruction, students spent time in informal conversation with local entrepreneurs, talking through the real barriers to starting a business and practical strategies for sustainable growth.

VOICES FROM THE TRIP

Raul Freire del Tio came away with a broader view of how business and service intersect, and returned home more motivated to build a career around helping others.

“This trip had a very positive impact because we were able to see the reality of entrepreneurship in another country that has different economic challenges... This experience motivated me even more to continue my career and hopefully help more people in the future.” — Raul Freire del Tio

Anna Moore gained confidence in her Spanish and a deeper appreciation for the generosity and hospitality of her Dominican hosts.

“This experience had a profound impact on me. I gained confidence in my language skills and learned so much from both our students and our friends at CEZOPAS. ”
— Anna Moore

“We started from nothing and they found sources and resources, they researched the Dominican culture and economy, they supported one each other and

BUILT A COHESIVE AND STRONG TEAM.

THEY INSPIRED ME ALL THE WAY THROUGH.

I not only appreciate Anna, Raúl and Kade, I love them for their strength, their ability to push forward, and

FOR THE LEADERS THAT THEY HAVE BECOME.”

— Professor Mari De Dios

Kade Van Ry saw firsthand how immersive language practice and cross-cultural connection can carry benefits well beyond the classroom.

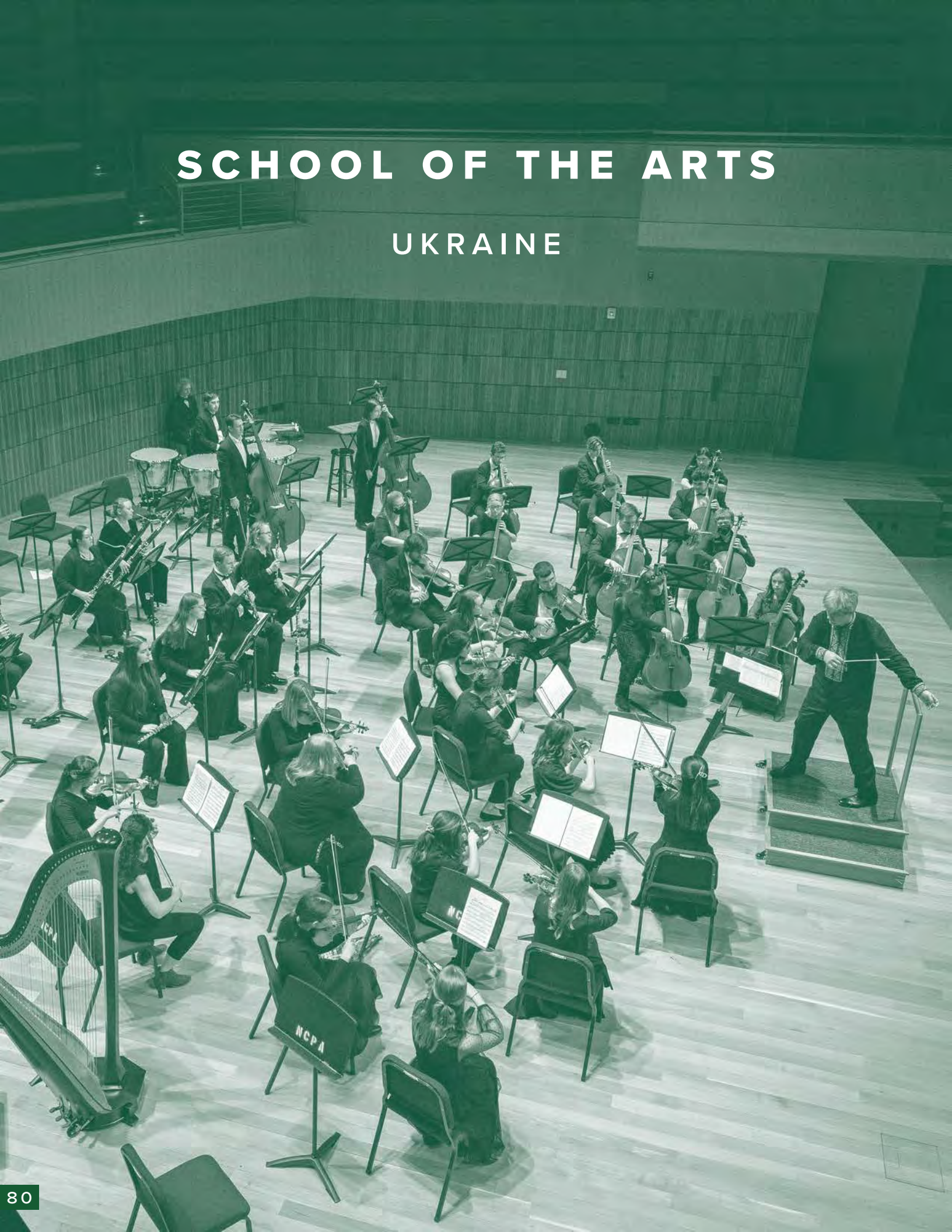
“I was able to practice my Spanish in an environment completely foreign to me, and I’ve already seen it improve my interactions at work...I was able to expand my network internationally, a benefit I believe will help my career long term.”
— Kade Van Ry

Professor Mari De Dios, who led the project, said watching her students grow into a strong, capable team was the experience’s greatest reward.



A MODEL WORTH REPLICATING

The initiative advances SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and reflects UNESCO’s broader priorities around global citizenship and intercultural exchange. Its low-cost, high-impact structure, pairing virtual instruction with in-person mentorship, offers a model other institutions could replicate, showing that even a small, well-supported international program can produce lasting educational and human impact on both sides



SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

UKRAINE

UVU CONCERT

“AN EVENING FOR UKRAINE”

UKRAINE

Peter Sirotin, Ukrainian concertmaster of the Harrisburg Symphony, performed with the UVU Symphony on April 13, 2026. The event, “An Evening for Ukraine” was a powerful tribute to the vibrant country, culture, and resiliency in the face of hardship.

UVU FACULTY LEAD



Dr. Cheung Chau
*School of the Arts-
Music*



SDG TARGETS AND INDICATORS

4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	Target	4.5	Indicator	4.5.1
	Target	4.a	Indicator	4.a.1
	Target	4.7	Indicator	4.7.1
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES 	Target	10.2	Indicator	10.2.1
	Target	11.1	Indicator	11.1.1
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	Target	11.1	Indicator	11.1.1

AN EVENING FOR UKRAINE



April 13, 2026

The UVU Symphony Orchestra welcomed Ukrainian-born violinist and Harrisburg Symphony concertmaster Peter Sirotin for “An Evening for Ukraine,” a performance honoring Ukrainian culture and resilience. The event was part of a UNESCO Chair project led by Dr. Cheung Chau, who serves on the UNESCO Executive Board representing the College of Arts, further connecting the performance to broader international cultural and educational initiatives. Blending powerful music with meaningful context, the concert created a space for reflection on the human impact of ongoing conflict. The Office for Global Engagement supported event logistics and hosted visiting Ukrainian Consul General Dmytro Kushneruk, who traveled to UVU specifically for this event and offered valuable insights on Ukraine’s cultural resilience and current realities. The program was made possible through close collaboration across campus and international partners, and reflects deep gratitude for the shared artistry of Peter Sirotin as well as the Consul General’s presence and perspective, which together elevated the event’s cultural and diplomatic significance.



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

THAILAND

COLLABORATION WITH ATLANTIC EDUCATION

THAILAND



UVU FACULTY LEAD



Dr. Adam Ogurlu
Elementary Education

PARTICIPATING
UNIVERSITIES

Chindamanee School in Bangkok

SDG TARGETS
AND INDICATORS

4 QUALITY EDUCATION 	Target 4 Indicator 4c.1
8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	Target 8.9 Indicator 8.9.1
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	Target 11.4 Indicator 11.4.1



UVU IN THAILAND:

ADVANCING AI ETHICS AND GLOBAL EDUCATION

June 6-10, 2026

What does it look like to put UNESCO's ideals into practice? For Dr. Adam Orgulu and a cohort of UVU School of Education graduate students, the answer took shape this past June in Bangkok, Thailand. Through an eight-day collaborative exchange with Chindamane School, the program moved international educational cooperation out of the abstract and into the classroom, producing meaningful professional growth for educators on both sides of the partnership.



The Thailand Educational Visit Program, developed under UVU's UNESCO Chair project, connects UVU graduate students with Thai educators at Chindamanee School to advance sustainability-focused, equity-driven educational practice. The program is built around four core components: educational collaboration through classroom observation and mentorship dialogue, workshop facilitation on AI ethics and sustainable teaching practices, cultural integration to understand how local values shape educational systems, and reflective learning documented through daily journals and post-experience assessments tied to UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals.

A PARTNERSHIP BUILT ON MUTUAL EXPERTISE

Chindamanee School is an ideal partner for this work. Operating under the Cambridge education system, the school has cultivated an environment where bilingual instruction, strong character development, and academic rigor coexist, drawing immediate admiration from UVU participants. The school's openness to new ideas and sustained commitment to equity and excellence made genuine collaboration possible from the outset.

The exchange was genuinely bidirectional. UVU faculty and graduate students contributed expertise in teacher preparation, educational technology, artificial intelligence in education, and evidence-based

instructional practices. In return, Chindamanee educators offered deep insight into community-centered education, culturally responsive teaching, and the integration of local values into daily classroom life. Both institutions, as Dr. Orgulu notes, contribute to "UNESCO's vision of international cooperation, intercultural understanding, and quality education for all."

"Seeing Chindamanee's commitment to bilingual education while maintaining strong character development showed me that you don't have to choose between academic rigor and whole-child education. They're doing both beautifully — and that's something I want to bring back to my own classroom for my multilingual students."

RETHINKING WHAT GOOD TEACHING LOOKS LIKE

One of the program's most significant outcomes was the shift in how UVU participants understood effective teaching. Observing Thai classrooms and co-teaching alongside Chindamanee educators challenged assumptions and expanded professional repertoires in ways that no textbook could replicate.

The teacher-student relationship emerged as a universal cornerstone. As one participant reflected:

"One major takeaway is that strong teacher-student relationships create a positive classroom environment. When students know their teacher cares about them, they are more respectful, engaged, and willing to participate. It also helps eliminate a lot of the bad behavior that can come up in our daily teaching."

Participants also gained new frameworks for student engagement and shared accountability. As one educator observed: "In many ways, students are the same everywhere. We all need to work together to find ways to engage them and help them take responsibility for their learning."



The program also opened substantive professional conversations around the use of AI in the classroom. Chindamanee faculty currently use AI in limited ways and are thoughtful about its implications. UVU participants brought information on the ethical use of AI, its benefits and drawbacks, and practical strategies for differentiation — exchanges that enriched both sides of the conversation.



EDUCATION AS A FORCE FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Perhaps the program’s deepest impact was in expanding participants’ understanding of what education is ultimately for. Dr. Orgulu designed the program around the belief that quality education extends beyond academic achievement to encompass global citizenship, cultural understanding, inclusion, and meaningful community engagement, and participants felt that vision come to life.

Engagement with Thailand’s educational structures, community values, and approaches to student wellbeing prompted many participants to fundamentally rethink their own assumptions. Exposure to different pedagogical frameworks and social contexts challenged them to ask more thoughtful questions and seek a deeper understanding of perspectives that differ from their own. When educators develop the capacity to think globally while acting locally, they bring that perspective back to their own students, multiplying the impact of every international exchange many times over.



**“My biggest takeaway is that
GREAT TEACHING TRANSCENDS
BORDERS, whether in Utah or Bangkok
— THE CORE OF WHAT MATTERS IS
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, valuing every
student as an individual, and creating
learning environments where kids feel
safe to take risks and grow.”**

A MODEL FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATION

The Chindamanee–UVU partnership is more than a single program. It is a demonstration that high-quality, reciprocal international educational collaboration is achievable — and transformative. Both institutions returned from this exchange with strengthened practice, deepened professional relationships, and a clearer sense of how their local work connects to global goals.

“This trip showed me how much educators have to learn from one another even when we are teaching in completely different parts of the world. Great teaching is not limited to one approach, and educators around the world can strengthen one another through collaboration and shared learning.”

This is precisely what the UNESCO Chair project is designed to produce: educators who are not only excellent in their own classrooms, but who understand themselves as participants in a global educational community — and who carry that understanding back to every student they teach.

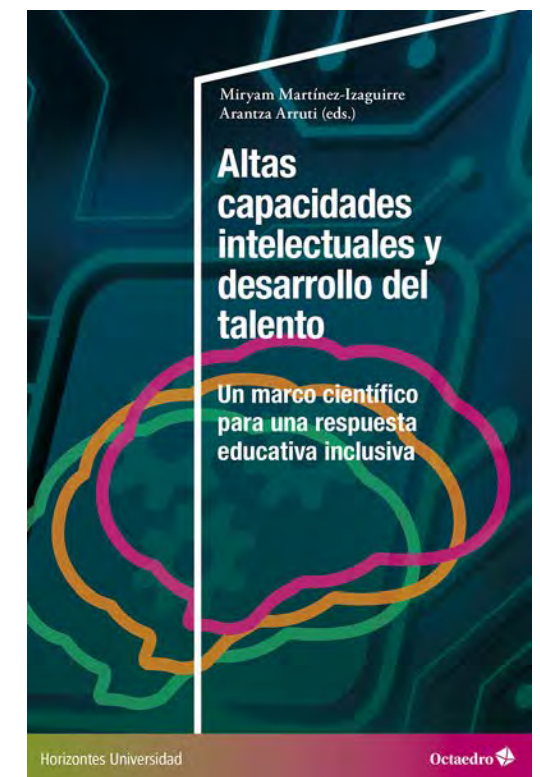


May, 2026

Dr. Orgulu traveled to Bilbao, Spain, to deliver an invited presentation at the international congress “Promoting the Development of High Intellectual Abilities in Inclusive Schools,” organized by Deusto University in partnership with the Basque Government’s Department of Education. The congress drew more than 500 scholars, researchers, educators, and policymakers from around the world. Dr. Orgulu’s presentation, “Rethinking Social-Emotional Development in Gifted Individuals: Insights from Meta-Analyses and Systematic Reviews,” examined evidence-based findings on social adjustment, emotional well-being, peer relationships, and psychosocial development among gifted learners — and offered practical guidance for educators, counselors, and families.

FIRST UVU UNESCO CHAIR PUBLICATION

Alongside his presentation given in May, Dr. Orgulu contributed a scholarly book chapter on the social-emotional development of gifted and talented individuals, published in Spanish as part of an academic volume on contemporary issues in gifted education. This invitation grew directly from the UVU UNESCO Chair’s 2025 Summer Institute in Spain, where board members visited Deusto University, the University of Salamanca, and Saint Louis University–Madrid Campus to explore international partnerships. Both the presentation and publication reflect the Chair’s ongoing commitment to global research dissemination and collaboration.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE AND
VIEW PUBLICATION

III International SDG Forum From Research to Action



Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil
March 16 - 18, 2026



The UVU UNESCO Chair received international recognition for its innovative approach to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and was invited to present its academic model at the United Nations Local2030 Coalition Global Conference. The presentation highlighted the Chair's work in partnering with local communities around the world to translate global sustainability objectives into impactful local action. Further underscoring this recognition, UNESCO Chair Director Baldomero Lago was invited to serve as plenary speaker at the III International SDG Forum: From Research to Action in Curitiba, Brazil. The conference concluded with the adoption of the Paraná Declaration: Toward Transformative Science for Territorial Action, reaffirming a collective commitment to strengthening the connection between research, public policy, and territorial implementation.

WANT TO HELP SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS?

MAKE A DONATION!

“The success of the UNESCO Chair is rooted in the engagement of our students, whose hands-on international experiences bridge academic learning and community impact. Their work demonstrates how education can empower future leaders to create lasting change at both the local and global levels.”

-BALDOMERO LAGO

UVU UNESCO CHAIR DIRECTOR

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