

Celebrating women worldwide

International Women's Day falls on March 8th every year, and is celebrated around the globe. The celebration is seen around the world, appreciating and celebrating women. In the United States the month of March has been designated as National Women's History Month. These two celebrations are important ways to recognize women and the movement towards equality in all aspects of life. Celebrating progress and encouraging it through national and international movements encourages further growth and development.

In light of these two-special annual celebrations Utah Valley University (UVU) held a panel on March 6th to discuss named "Empowering Women around the World." The theme of this event was "The time is Now: Rural and Urban activities transforming Women's lives." The first member of the panelist was Gail Bindley –Taylor Sainte, who was a former journalist and worked as the former senior information officer at the United Nations. The second member was Ambassador Milos Vukasinovic, a Permanent representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations (UN). The next panelist was Celina Milner, her platform was as a women's advocate, Government Liaison, and Campaign consultant. The final panelist Shirlee Silversmith is involved in the Utah division of Indian Affairs. Each Panelist went through and explained why this celebration is important to them and how the strives towards equality have effected their lives.

At the beginning of presentation Ms. Celina Milner discussed importance of the words empowerment and progression. She described her journey through college and the political world as, "I am going to jump right in." These words struck me, and motivated me to follow my passions, but you can't wait, even when it looks daunting, you have to just go for it. When describing her experiences running for office, she elaborated that it is hard as Women not seem to harsh or extremely soft, all while maintaining an authentic presence. When a Women runs for political office or any position in general it will be different than the efforts that a man puts forward. No matter the effects by a man or a woman the presence and positions have to be authentic to the individual before they can be authentic for the people. Voters for political champagnes or an audience in general is more willing to favor a candidate that is authentic, creating a vulnerability that everyone can connect to.

One of the overarching themes of the panel was that as a community and a society we need to stand together. Women can support other Women, helping our influence to grow. It is important

to remember and value our differences, but also to come together and notice the commonalities and how we can grow. One of UVU's main pillars is inclusion. When our student body and community remembers to include everyone, different and similar we can grow together. As a whole, we need to stand together to support whatever may come. The progress that the world and this area has made has been tremendous, and now we just need to continue to move forward.

An example of the progress that has been made in the last century would be women's suffrage. In 1920 the 19th amendment was passed which gave women the right to vote nationwide, through the Federal Government. Before the Federal Government passed the 19th amendment, Utah was one of the first states which allowed women to vote. Allowing Women to vote earlier is a historical example of Utah's support for inclusion and expansion. When we look at the progress made since the 20's, we can see how far our society has come in a century. Through UVU and celebrating international women's day, we hope to increase the amount of inclusion and protection of rights.

Kymerlee Anderson, UVU student