

Statement

**Parallel event “Student Engaged Learning to empower mountain women and girls”
63rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women
Aldon Trimble, member, Utah International Mountain Forum,
a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University**

Today is a highlight of my involvement in Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) by presenting at this highest UN forum on gender. My name is Aldon Trimble, I grew up in Vermont, and spent two years of my life serving the people of Veracruz and Puebla Mexico. UIMF promotes the sustainable mountain development agenda of the UN in the State of Utah since 2011. During previous semesters I helped to re-charter UVU Rotaract as part of UIMF during spring 2017 and then to co-host the director for outreach division of the UN Department of Public Information Mr. Maher Nasser during November 2018.

One of the unique qualities of the university is that many of the students like myself, are nontraditional, meaning that we are part of our community. I believe that this aspect of UVU is not a weakness but a strength which allows students to have a greater stake in local events and culture. The involvement of UVU, and it’s students in local development and social projects has been an indispensable resource for the local mountain community. Student service and engaged learning opportunities abound, as businesses, government entities, and non-profit organizations benefit from the students actively working with them.

We, the UIMF, have arranged everything by ourselves, starting from raising funds, preparing statements, and working out the agenda of the meetings at the UN. As a result we are contributing in a meaningful way to the main theme of CSW63 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This is an example of a engaged learning initiative which allows to students make a difference in lives and empower women and girls in rural and mountain areas. Now I will report about what I involve myself in at UVU.

We have worked to better understand the problems present in Utah. The goal of the organization has been to help students work and network with outside universities, governments, and experts, to better understand local sustainable development issues. In 2017 the office took a team of undergraduate students to Oxford, in which they presented their findings on the Air Quality of Utah. The finding were researched chiefly by undergraduate students working with faculty and experts in order to increase the validity and expertise of the project. Oxford published the research findings effectively legitimizing UVU’s approach of engaged learning.

The most recent project seeks to fully understand the consequences and issues surrounding the children of incarcerated parents in the state of Utah. The students as well as myself have reached out to over 50 experts in the field of incarceration, psychology, and sociology, as well as government officials. Additionally, we have interviewed over 500 inmates, to better understand the present issue. We have been able to identify several issues, namely recidivism caused by the absence of a parent in the home and exploitation by private groups with contracts associated with local prisons and jails.

Our findings point to solutions surrounding a culture change from punishment culture to rehabilitation culture. Additionally, we hope to propose solutions surrounding proper regulation and rights management for the incarcerated, which would allow better ease of access for family members to continue their relationships with their incarcerated family members and vice versa.

The Office of New Urban Mechanics is working to help Utah become a beacon and example for implementation of the UN sustainable development goals, which focus on rural communities and families with students playing a key role in making these goals come to fruition. Thank you all for your time and consideration.