

STATEMENT
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Utah Valley University Rotaractor
67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women
Parallel Event
“Inclusive Student Engaged Learning Model to Empower Mountain Women Globally”
March 6th, 2023.

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Camilla Pendleton, a Global Politics senior at Utah Valley University (UVU). I appreciate the opportunity to speak today and urge this session to focus on the education of mountain women and girls.

For UVU, this has been a special issue since 2007 when we began hosting the International Women of the Mountains conferences, gathering representatives from many mountain states including Nepal. Since 2001, Nepal has implemented various programs that have increased access to education for young women. However, according to the Annual Household Survey in 2016, the literacy gap in Nepal between genders increases significantly with age. While young girls and boys are comparable, only 7% of females older than 60 are literate compared to 38% of males. Women in Nepal and globally face challenges that complicate their participation in secondary education, including being the primary caretakers of children and maintaining domestic and community needs. They are also often stigmatized and shamed for abandoning domestic responsibilities for their education.

One important initiative to address these challenges is the UVU student engaged learning model or SEL, which encourages students, especially non-traditional students, to work as a group to solve real issues with faculty serving as a mentor. One example is the UVU Wee-Care program which provides childcare for non-traditional students and working moms. The curriculum was created with student participation and continuing contribution, providing community benefits while giving students real-world experience that benefits their education.

Mountain communities worldwide, including Nepal, could benefit from implementing the UVU SEL model as an inclusive educational initiative, which relies on non-traditional students as leaders to provide further opportunities for women and mothers. Thank you.