

## Statement

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**Utah Valley University student  
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**Parallel Event**

*Empowering Mountain Women through Inclusive Student-engaged Learning Educational Initiative*

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Good afternoon, my name is Elisabeth Jones. I am a non-traditional student studying National Security and global security issues, focusing on African peace and justice through strong institutions (SDG 16), particularly in rural and mountainous regions.

An African Proverb states “if you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation.” The Student-engaged Learning model or SEL addresses gender equity gaps that African and mountain women everywhere in STEM education and careers fields are challenged with, through online autonomous learning, digitized certifications, and direct financial capital opportunities.

I know this from my own personal SEL experiences. I attend class in various learning modalities, including online, and am upskilling with an IBM Cybersecurity course that will provide digital certifications. SEL has allowed me to use newly developed skills in practical group settings as a Vice President of the National Security Society club and as a mentor to younger students.

As the sole financial provider and mother of four, I embody a modern mountain woman. My children are my greatest assets. They watch and learn from me the value of gender equity and higher education. When they are not at the on campus daycare or playing in the family library room while I study, they are sitting on my lap at home as I learn about cyber infrastructures, attending my lectures, and beside me serving our community.

The SEL model could provide similar benefits to mothers in Africa and other mountain nations worldwide, through collaborative team work, group activities, and mentorship. My life experiences and research proves that STEM education and positive career outcomes are attainable for mountain women everywhere when strong national institutions empower achievement. Peace and justice prevail when good men and good women speak truth to power.

THANK YOU.