

**Dr. Jay DeSart**  
**Department Chair of UVU's History & Political Science**  
**67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women**  
**Parallel event**  
***"Inclusive Student Engaged Learning Model to Empower Mountain Women Globally"***  
**March 6, 2023**

It is my special pleasure to speak today by representing the Department of History and Political Science at Utah Valley University (UVU) during this parallel event. I thank Dr. Rusty Butler, main UN representative of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences (RANS) and Wendy Jyang, President of the Utah China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands Development and Commerce (Utah-China F.I.S.H.D.&C.) for providing an opportunity for our students to implement an inclusive co-curricular Student Engaged Learning (SEL) model in action here at the United Nations. I am glad also to greet Dr. Baldomero Lago, CIO of the UVU Office for Global Engagement with whom our department jointly collaborates on this educational initiative since its beginning. SEL, is problem-based learning, which encourages students to resolve certain practical issues as a team during or outside class while the teacher mentors them.

Our team is led by members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU. Since 2011, UIMF has been the extracurricular core of the model because of the challenges in planning these UN activities, which could last longer than a regular semester, through a regular academic program. As a distinct feature of our model, it encourages both traditional and non-traditional students to work together. Non-traditional students are older than 25 and balance their education with family and job responsibilities. Students jointly handle everything for this visit starting from raising funds, to logistics, to protocol, to developing an agenda, and to learning how to engage NGOs accredited at the UN like our two hosts, and then work during the UN visit as their members. They also have invited us to contribute to their presentations and activities.

UIMF members during the fall semester every year since 2010 rehearse their UN activities by observing the International Mountain Day together with RANS and Utah-China F.I.S.H.D.&C. as well as the Orem-Lindon Rotarians. This is the sixth session of the Commission in which the UVU student delegates advocate for mountain causes by hosting a parallel event and being highlighted in joint written statements by RANS and Utah-China F.I.S.H.D.&C.

I would like to acknowledge the leading role in implementing this model from my colleague, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, who has tirelessly served as UIMF mentor since 2011 and now implements the visit within the class Political Science 3410 on Globalization and Sustainable Development. At the same time, this initiative always enjoyed strong support and contributions from his colleagues including Dr. Hong Pang, who is here with us, Dr. Geoffrey Cockerham and Dr. Lynn England. Each of them encouraged and mentored their students to speak about their programs during this event.

I have also to thank my predecessors who provided unwavering support to the model as department and program chairs, such as Dr. Alexander Stecker, Dr. Keith Snedegar, Dr. Kat Brown and Dr. David Connelly. Special thanks also deserve the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr. Steven Clark and his predecessor, Dr. David Yells.