

Mr. Jesler Molina, Utah Department of Commerce and UVU Political Science Alumnus, lectured during the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Class.

Student at the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals class at Utah Valley University (UVU) hosted Mr. Jesler Molina on February 28th, 2024. Mr. Molina, a current policy analyst at the Office of Licensure and Review of the Utah Department of Commerce, shared insights into his experience as a president of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) (2014-2015), a coalition of student clubs at UVU and his current professional career.



Professor Baktybek Abdrysaev (left) and Mr. Molina (right)

Mr. Molina began his presentation with his home country of Venezuela. Molina's interest in politics began in middle school through a Model UN class. When he arrived at UVU in 2011, he noticed the absence of a Model UN class and took the initiative to establish one. A year later after the formation of UVU's Model UN club, they earned an invitation to attend the United Nations General Assembly, giving Molina and those invited an invaluable networking opportunity that provided a foundation for his future success.

As the Model UN club at UVU grew, so did the focus on sustainable development (SD). SD activities at UVU began with organizing an essay contest for high school students in Utah County. The contest encouraged students to research and write about SD and energy resources within the state. Molina and other UVU students continued this by contributing to research on

sustainable mountain development (SMD) within the Sierra Madre Mountain Range. This research was done for the SMD in North America report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations for the United Nations Conference on SD in Rio de Janeiro (Rio+20) in 2012.

These initiatives culminated in the UIMF, a coalition of student clubs at UVU. The club had the goal of promoting SD in mountain communities through a student-engaged learning model. This approach promotes collaboration and hands-on problem-solving under faculty mentorship. Mr. Molina supported various events, including hosting New York Times Correspondent Somini Sengupta in 2014 and the President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Martin Sajdik, in 2015.



Mr. Molina speaking

As UIMF President, Molina spoke at the Open Working Group session on SDGs at the United Nations headquarters in New York City on December 11, 2013. Molina strengthened ties with co-chairs of the Open Working Group, Macharia Kamua and Csaba Korosi. After he graduated Malina continued to contribute to UVU, welcoming the former co-chairs, Ambassador Macharia Kamau in 2017 and the current President of the United Nations General Assembly, Ambassador Korosi, on May 15, 2023.



Group Photo

At the end of his presentation, he went over his current professional duties as an analyst at the Utah Department of Commerce. He discussed how licensing happens and the research conducted to promote better practices within Utah. This includes recent research on all behavioral health facilities within the state.



Mr. Molina (right) and Braden Birbara (left)

Mr. Malina's presentation shows the development of the UIMF emphasizing its significant contributions to sustainable mountain development. He encouraged both students and current UIMF members. He stressed never giving up, trust, teamwork, and keeping in contact after graduation. I enjoyed his talk and was greatly informed on state licensing and UIMF's contribution to the SDGs. I was able to contribute to the hosting of Mr. Molina through the student-engaged learning model by filming and editing the recording of the event as well as uploading the event to the UIMF YouTube channel.

Braden Birbara – UIMF Vice President