

# Jesler Molina: How Student Engage Learning Contributed to His Success in Policy

Danielle Keysaw



Mr. Jesler Molina introducing himself to the class of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals class

Mr. Jesler Molina, a Utah Valley University (UVU) Alumni and the second president of the UIMF, presented in-person in our class on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at UVU on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Currently, Mr. Molina is a policy analyst for the Office of Professional Licensure Review (OPLR) of the Utah Department of Commerce. During his visit, he shared his journey as a college student to then a political career and how the inclusive Student-Engaged Learning (SEL) model contributed to his success today.

Mr. Molina grew up in Venezuela where he was introduced to the United Nations (UN) through the Model UN Club at his school. After he came to UVU in 2011, he shortly realized there wasn't such a club. He and three other students created UVU's first Model UN Club in the same

year. The four of them were then invited by the delegation of Hungary to observe and work in the opening ceremony of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on September 25, 2012.

While developing the Model UN Club, Mr. Molina contributed to founding the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of UVU student clubs, alongside John McClure, the first UIMF President. Mr. Molina encouraged youth to engage in political events. So, he hosted an essay contest for high school and college students in Utah that would be presented at UVU. This allowed high school and college students to participate in their own/mentored literature research regarding Sustainable Development and energy usage in the United States (US) and presenting their findings at UVU.



Mr. Jesler Molina speaking to the students of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals class.

Mr. Molina and 18 other UVU students undertook researching the sustainable development of seven different ranges in North America. This research was presented to the UNGA at the Rio+20 Sustainable Mountain Development conference in January 2012. It was so valuable that it was used in the decision-making process of the UNGA relating to the sustainable development

goals. Then, in October 2014, Mr. Molina hosted the New York Times Correspondent at UVU, where he proposed UIMF's involvement in the sustainable mountain development (SMD) promotion. This event kicked off UVU's participation in the UNGA conference, eventually leading to Mr. Molina speaking at an Open Working Group (OWG) meeting in December 2013, where the sustainable development goals (SDG) were underway.

After listening to Mr. Molina's talk, I felt like I was where I am supposed to be academically. I felt reassured that I had chosen the correct field of study for myself, my skills, and my family. Historically, people tend to feel like the moment they start grade school, they should know what they want to be when they grow up. This belief system is disruptive and limiting. It is important to view uncertainty as a learning opportunity to

explore our interests. As Mr. Molina described how the SEL model has opened many doors to him, I related through my own experiences in my many labs and groups projects I have worked on.



Mr. Jesler Molino (L) and Danielle Keysaw (R) after his presentation.

*Danielle Keysaw, Biology Student at Utah Valley University*

