

A Pioneering Journey: Mr. Jesler Molina's Contribution to Sustainable Development and Beyond



Stephan Atkinson, UIMF president with Former UIMF President, Jesler Molina

On February 28th, 2024, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals class at Utah Valley University (UVU) had the distinct honor of hosting Mr. Jesler Molina, a distinguished UVU Political Science alumnus and a current policy analyst at the Office of Licensure and Review of the Utah Department of Commerce. Mr. Molina, who served as the president of the Utah International

Mountain Forum (UIMF) from 2014 to 2015, shared invaluable insights from his journey in sustainable development and his subsequent professional career.



Mr. Jesler Molina lectures at UVU

Mr. Molina's narrative commenced with his roots in Venezuela, tracing back to his middle school days when his fascination with politics was sparked by a Model UN class. This early exposure laid the groundwork for his advocacy and involvement in international affairs. Upon his arrival at UVU in 2011, he was quick to identify the absence of a Model UN class and took the initiative to establish one. This effort not only filled a gap at the university but also paved the way for Molina and his peers to attend the United Nations General Assembly a year later, a pivotal moment that expanded their horizons and professional networks.

The growth of the Model UN club at UVU coincided with an increasing emphasis on sustainable development (SD). Among the early initiatives was an essay contest for high school students in Utah County, aimed at encouraging research and discourse on sustainable development and energy resources within the state. This endeavor expanded into more significant research efforts, notably on sustainable mountain development (SMD) within the Sierra Madre Mountain Range, contributing to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' report for the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

These activities were instrumental in the formation of the UIMF, a coalition of student clubs dedicated to promoting sustainable development in mountain communities through a student-engaged learning model. This model fosters collaboration and practical problem-solving, guided by faculty mentorship. Under Mr. Molina's leadership, UIMF hosted notable figures, including New York Times Correspondent Somini Sengupta in 2014 and the President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Martin Sajdik, in 2015.

Molina's impact extended to the global stage when he represented UIMF at the Open Working Group session on SDGs at the United Nations headquarters on December 11, 2013. There, he engaged with key figures such as Macharia Kamua and Csaba Korosi, further strengthening UIMF's ties with international sustainable development efforts.

Concluding his presentation, Mr. Molina discussed his role at the Utah Department of Commerce, emphasizing the importance of licensing and research in promoting best practices within the state, including a comprehensive review of behavioral health facilities.

The visit from Mr. Molina not only highlighted the significant strides made by UIMF in contributing to sustainable mountain development but also served as a beacon of inspiration for students and UIMF members alike. His message underscored the values of perseverance, trust, teamwork, and the importance of maintaining connections post-graduation.

As President of UIMF, I was privileged to contribute to hosting Mr. Molina, capturing and sharing his insights through our channels. His visit has enriched our understanding of both the challenges and opportunities in sustainable development and professional practice, reinforcing our commitment to making a tangible impact in these critical areas.

Stephan Atkinson – UIMF President