

Statement
Mary Ann Stea
69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
Parallel Event
“An Inclusive Student-Engaged Learning Model to Empower Mountain Women and Girls”
March 10, 2025

My name is Mary Stea, and I am an alumna of Utah Valley University, having graduated in 2020 with a degree in integrated studies with emphasis in Sociology, Peace and Justice studies, and Political Science. I am pleased and honored to be a part of this 69th session of the Commission of the Status of Women. I have participated in many extracurricular activities, such as the Women of the Mountains International Conference, which was held in 2015, under the umbrella of the United Nations. This event was an exceptional experience for me.

As a non-traditional student working with traditional students, has shown me the value of an education that includes the Student Engaged Learning model. Practical use of this model had given students the opportunity to organize this event, under the mentorship of our Distinguished Professor mentor, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, who, incidentally, has experience in international politics as an Ambassador from the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to Canada and also to the United States. It was he who invited me to be a part of this extraordinary event.

Participants from mountain communities all over the world came to Orem, Utah, to share their expertise in topics such as; sustainable mountain development, climate change, protection of mountain culture, healthcare, and education, just to name a few. I had the responsibility to moderate the economics session.

On the final day we had a luncheon, and keynote speaker Kena Mathews, who was director at the time of Habitat for Humanity of Utah County, also in Orem, celebrated her birthday with us. It truly brought out not only a sense of friendship, but also of a tight knit community of people from mountain communities all over the world. It was an experience truly worthy of the United Nations prime mission of peace in the world, and it shows that the issues of mountain women and girls deserve to be included in the final CSW69 document.

In retrospect, the Use of the Student Engaged Learning model at Utah Valley University at the Women of the Mountains International Conference was so beneficial to not only me, but to all the students who contributed their time and effort. Many of us have continued to engage with the people and organizations we networked with, doing service work such as beautification of Orem City parks, and engaging in public discourse with politicians and dignitaries on important topics such as rights for mountain women and girls, climate change and sustainable mountain development.

These activities continue to be worthy of our support. Thank you