

## Raising Justice Awareness of Mountain Women Through Student-Engaged Learning

On March 10, 2026, from 12:30 to 2:00 PM EST, students from Utah Valley University (UVU) participated in the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, a United Nations Parallel event. Their parallel event centered around raising justice awareness of mountain women and it's vital nature for inclusion in the final document of the CSW70. Many of the students grew up in mountain communities and had seen the adverse effects the lack of representation had had in their community's development. Through participating in CSW70, the UVU students modeled the effectiveness of the Student Engaged Learning Model in providing a space for underrepresented individuals to make a change.



CSW Event Group Photo from the Presentations

During the parallel event, 19 students presented statements drafted in cooperation with their mentor, Baktbek Abdrisaev, about the importance of justice for mountain women in communities around the world. The event was held as a mid-term examination for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals class at UVU and allowed each student to present research on individual studies of specific mountainous countries.

Statements highlighted the role of women in mountainous communities and the specific challenges they face. The goal of these messages was to bring awareness to this conference, specifically held about women, to a group of women who had never been recognized as being important or adversely affected enough to be included in the final document of the CSW70.



### **Alley Holt Presents her Statement While Fellow Students Prepare**

Through their participation, the students also demonstrated a key learning strategy that can help make space for the voices of women around the world. The students participated in the Student Engaged Learning Model, which puts the responsibility for making a change into the hands of the students. In doing so, I myself have seen how I have been given space for my voice to be heard. I have learned skills that will help me continue to advocate for changes that affect my community.

Through this event, I learned how important it is to step up and participate to make things happen. I would not have thought this event would come together the way it did. But I learned the value of teamwork and everyone playing their part. I learned how important it is to listen to

feedback from those who have experience and to take what I have created and work to make it better.

I had the opportunity to write a statement for this event about my own personal experience participating in the Student Engaged Learning Model and how it had provided a space for my voice, a woman from a mountainous community that wouldn't have found it otherwise, to be heard. In preparing for this event I also had the opportunity to design and collaborate on the poster and background for the event. Opportunities like these have helped me to appreciate all the small details and teamwork that go into working to make a change.

The poster features a green background with silhouettes of diverse people in the lower half. At the top left, it says 'March 10 -21' and 'NGO CSW FORUM 70'. At the top right, it reads 'The civil society gathering in NYC Parallel to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women'. The main title is 'Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University' followed by 'PARALLEL EVENT\*' and 'Raising Justice Awareness of Mountain Women Through Student-Engaged Learning'. Below the title, it lists 'DAY: MARCH 10, 2026', 'TIME: 12:30- 1:45 PM EST', and 'LIVE STREAM: www.youtube.com/live/AyGfHiLdP8k'. A QR code is on the right side. At the bottom, there are logos for Mountain Partnership, Utah Valley University, Gary R. Herdoff, Student Club, and Orem-Lindon Rotary Club. A vertical credit line on the right says 'Designed By Alley Holt'.

March 10 -21  
NGO CSW FORUM 70

The civil society gathering in NYC  
Parallel to the United Nations  
Commission on the Status of Women

Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition  
of student clubs at Utah Valley University

PARALLEL EVENT\*

**Raising Justice Awareness  
of Mountain Women Through  
Student-Engaged Learning**

DAY: MARCH 10, 2026  
TIME: 12:30- 1:45 PM EST  
LIVE STREAM: [www.youtube.com/live/AyGfHiLdP8k](http://www.youtube.com/live/AyGfHiLdP8k)

\*The event is hosted as a mid-term examination for the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* class at Utah Valley University

Mountain Partnership  
UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY  
GARY R. HERDOFF  
STUDENT CLUB  
Orem-Lindon Rotary Club

Designed By Alley Holt

Poster Made by Alley Holt in Collaboration with Natalia Figueroa

Following our participation in this event, I would hope the message of advocacy for the women of the mountains is spread a little farther. I believe there is important work to be done in our community and that right now, students are more than capable of accomplishing that work. If nothing else, our parallel event for CSW70 was an example of this.



**Final Group Photo of Students at the event and their Mentor Baktybek Abdrisaev**

The work we do, of course, would not be possible without the dedication of so many different individuals. We have the incredible mentorship of our professor, Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev, the organizations we work with, such as the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club, the University as a whole, and all the amazing students supporting and working through the Utah International Mountain Forum, Foreign Affairs, Rotary, and Sustainable Development Clubs to thank for everything we accomplish. Important events like these would not be possible alone, and the message and experience are meant for everyone.

**By Alley Holt, Political Science Student and Sustainable Development Club President at Utah Valley University**