

My contribution to the International Mountain Day observation at UVU



The 11th annual International Mountain Day (IMD) observation at Utah Valley University, (UVU), was a wonderful way for me to learn about the importance of mountain communities and how we as students can contribute to Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD). The focus of this year's event was the importance of preserving biodiversity in mountains. This is especially relevant to UVU students given our community's close proximity to and reliance on the Wasatch mountain ranges.



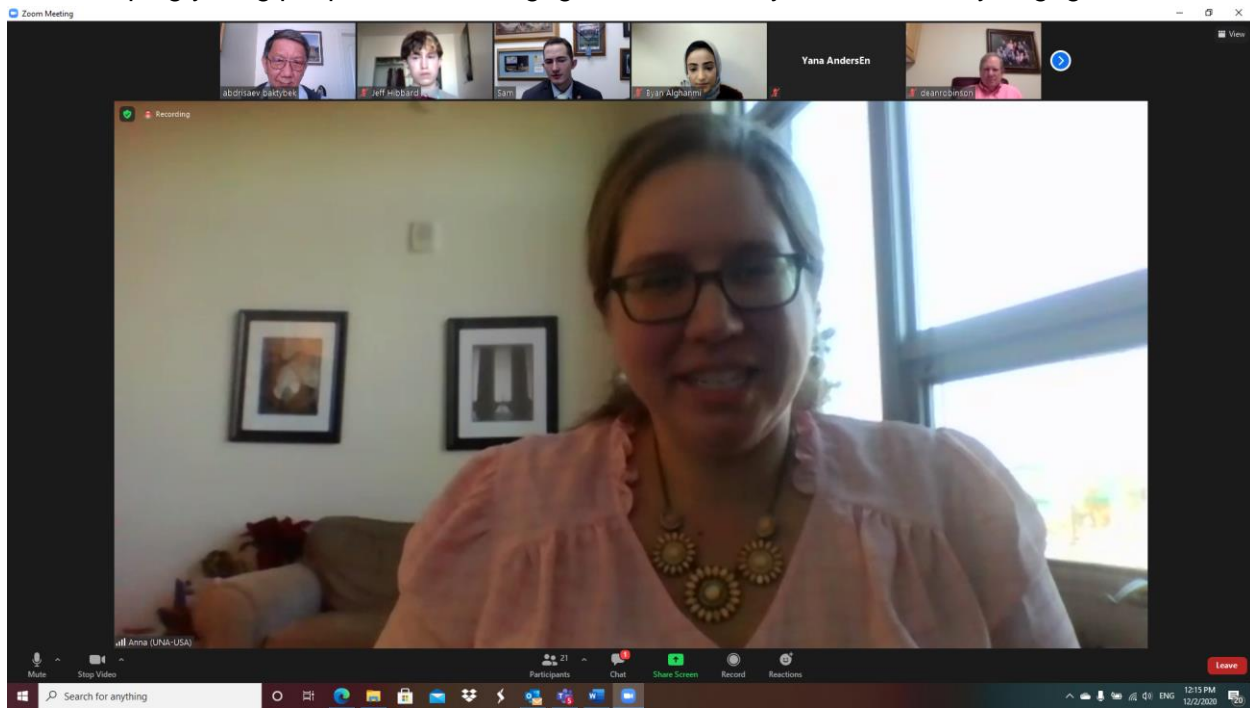
Participants of the IMD 2020 observation at UVU

UVU's observation of IMD is unique because we are the only and the only academic institution to annually observe IMD **through a student engaged learning (SEL)**. SEL requires us students to work on practical task as a group while our teacher could be involved and provide

indirect advice when we are not able to find a solution on our own. Therefore, IMD observation was the event entirely student led.

At the start of the event, we learned about the difficulties facing people who live in mountain regions. Professor Abdrisaev, on behalf of Dr. Butler, who could not attend, mentioned that mountain communities are among the most neglected around the world, despite the importance of mountains and their resources.

Following these remarks about the challenges facing mountain people, we heard from Anna Mahalak, a Youth Engagement Manager for UNA-USA. She talked about her experiences helping young people navigate the UN system and playing an active role in actualizing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was very interesting to hear how excited she was about helping young people be more engaged in UN activity and community engagement.



Anna Mahalak, a Youth Engagement Manager at UNA-USA speaks during the event

Anna also played for us a prerecorded message from one of the youth observers who taught us about the importance of preserving biodiversity and combating climate change. His message explained the devastating impact of climate change, as well as how we can be more involved in advocacy and sustainable development efforts.

The final speaker of the event was the Orem Rotary President, Dean Robinson. He discussed the history and purpose of Rotary International and encouraged us to get involved with UVU's Rotaract club to contribute to service projects and activities in our community and on a broader scale.

I really enjoyed this event, not only as a way to learn more about the importance of mountain communities, but also to learn using the student engaged learning (SEL) model used at UVU.



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Certificate of Contribution

This is to certify that
**Ms. Anna Mahalak, Youth Engagement Manager,
United Nations Association of the United States of America**

contributed in the International Mountain Day 2020 campaign,
hosting the events and raising awareness about
mountains and mountain communities.

Copy of the FAO-UN certificate presented to Anna Mahalak for contribution to IMD 2020

I worked with Dallas Karren, the UIMF Vice President, who did a remarkable job of taking the lead and delegating tasks to other students. My contribution to this event was to create the digital signage advertising the event to students and faculty. I also presented the FAO-UN certificates to everyone who contributed to Sustainable Mountain Development advocacy throughout the year. It was a very new experience to work on an event remotely. It was a challenge that was very new to everyone involved, however, everything still went very smoothly and we were all able to adapt to our new situation.

Sarah Michaelis, UIMF member