

Maintaining a Message: IMD 2020

The Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU) hosted the 11th annual International Mountain Day (IMD) observation virtually via a live stream on the UIMF Facebook page. The event was highly effective at spreading awareness for underrepresented mountain communities across the world. As this event was able to be held online, the UIMF maintained their consistency to annually observe International Mountain Day despite the challenges presented by COVID-19.



Participants of the IMD 2020 Observation at UVU

IMD at UVU is different because the event is organized and carried out by students with very limited and often indirect assistance from professors via a unique student-engaged learning (SEL) model. This method of student engagement is a great opportunity for students such as myself and many others to learn how to work as a team and be directly involved.

Vice President of UIMF, Dallas Karren, initiated the observation with the Welcoming Remarks and served as moderator for the event. President of UIMF, Sam Elzinga, then followed Dallas' remarks with information regarding IMD and UIMF. Dr. Abdrisaev filled in for Dr. Butler, Main UN Representative for the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences (RANS), a non-governmental organization, and spoke about how critical it is to understand and help communities in mountainous regions of the world because of how underrepresented they are. Mountain communities are widely impoverished and susceptible to modern challenges.

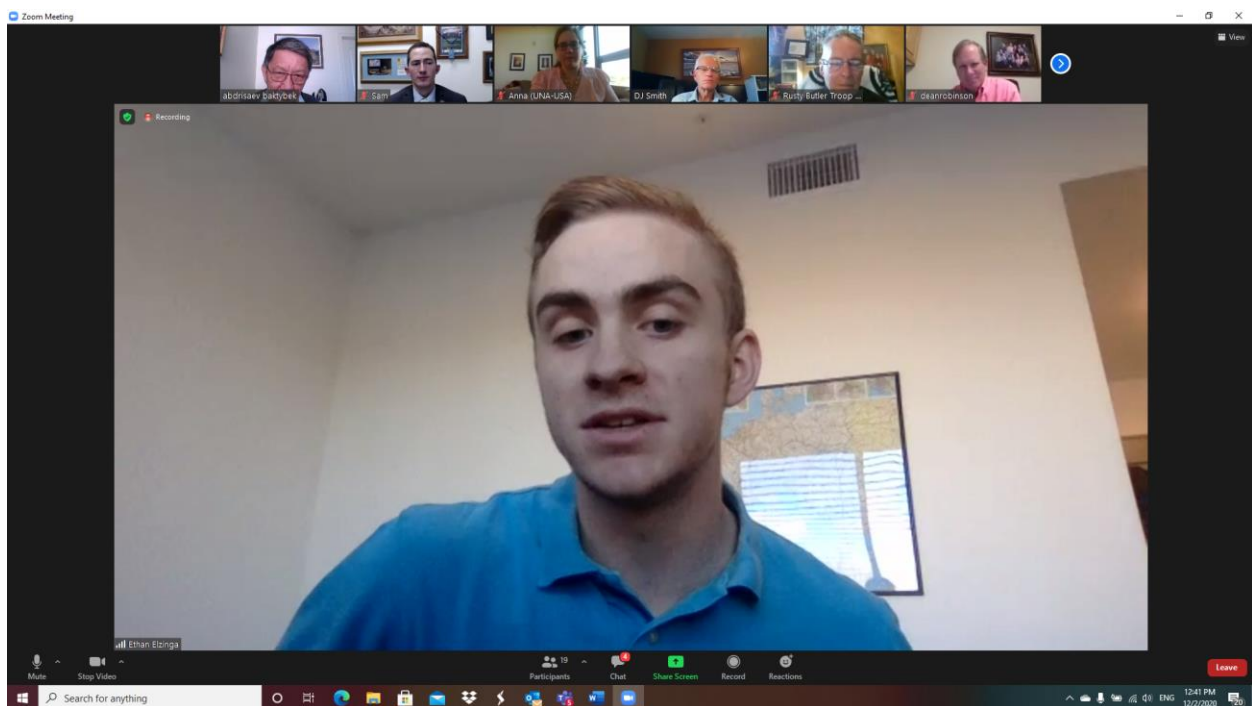


Anna Mahalak speaking on behalf of Dustin Liu

Anna Mahalak, UNA-USA Youth Engagement Manager, then talked about the United Nation's role regarding IMD and how crucial it is to maintain engagement internationally with UN bodies.

Following her presentation, Mr. Dean Robinson, currently serving as the president of the Orem Rotary Club, discussed how Rotary International plays a role on the global and state levels.

My role for this event was to introduce Dr. Robinson. Because I was able to be a part of this team, I was able to learn valuable team building skills while also working towards a good cause.



Ethan Elzinga Introducing Dr. Dean Robinson

Overall, this event was a huge success as the UIMF was able to raise awareness about sustainable development and the need for youth advocacy through organizations such as Rotaract which is a part of Rotary International intended for adults over the age of 18. The messages promoted reached an international audience and involved prominent institutions. Even during a

global pandemic, UIMF still held an event that was effective in its purpose and upheld the longstanding established tradition of annual IMD observance at UVU. .

Ethan Elzinga – Vice President of Events for the UVU National Security Society