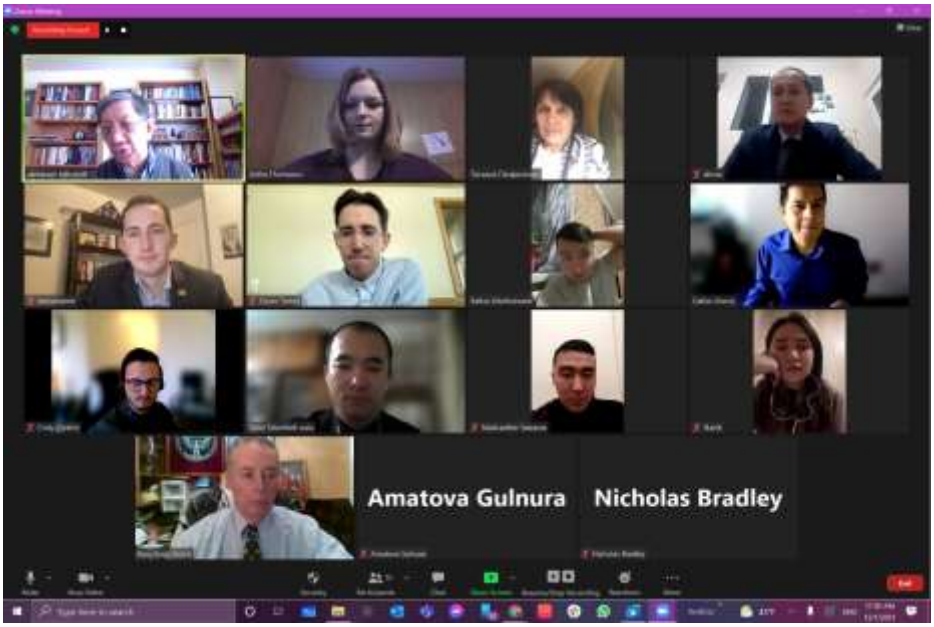
My second experience hosting International Mountain Day at UVU

On December 1st, 2021, I was again able for a second time to participate in the annual observation of International Mountain Day (IMD) at Utah Valley University (UVU). The Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU, has annually observed IMD since 2010, and this year marked the twelfth observation by UVU. We are the only academic institution in North America to do so. The theme of this years' IMD was sustainable mountain tourism, and the event was live streamed to the UIMF Facebook page.



Gallery view of participants

IMD 2021 was co-sponsored by the UN-FAO Mountain Partnership, UVU Office for Global Engagement, UVU Department of History and Political Science, UVU chapter of the

United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), the UIMF, the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences (RANS), an NGO in general consultative states with the Economic and Social Council; as well as the UVU Foreign Affairs and Rotaract clubs.

The event was hosted through the student-engaged learning (SEL) model implemented at UVU, which allows students to address real world problems with university faculty serving as mentos. Student members of UIMF and the UVU Foreign Affairs club, an affiliate organization of the UIMF, prepared the event logistically, handled media assignments, and other delegations through a task list. Per UIMF method, the Vice-President, Altiha Thompson, was the primary organizer and moderator of the event. It was my duty to assist her in any capacity she required and provide insight from my experience organizing and hosting the eleventh IMD in 2020.

Dr. Rusty Butler presents on Utah mountain tourism

Welcoming Remarks were provided by Mrs. Thompson, who initiated the event. Speakers included Carlos Alarco, UVU Associate Director for Education Abroad, who was introduced by Dallas Karren, UIMF President; Dr. Rusty Butler, RANS' Main Representative to the UN, who was introduced by Byan Alghanmi, Sustainable Mountain Development club President; Baiel Abibillaev, student representative from Osh Technological Institute, who was

introduced by Tatiana Panfilenko, from Osh; and Cody Conklin, UIMF member, who was introduced by Dylan Tweed, UVU Rotaract President.

Baiel Abibillaev presents on mountain tourism in Kyrgyzstan

Dr. Rusty Butler spoke on the vast natural amenities of Utah, the importance of mountains in our state, our world-class infrastructure and organization, as well as past involvements of Utah with the Mayor of Moscow and the Kyrgyz Republic. The UIMF enjoys a partnership with students and faculty at Osh Technological Institute of the Kyrgyz Republic. Through weeks of collaboration with us, they were able to contribute to preparations and present on mountain tourism in Kyrgyzstan during IMD 2021, and share a short video they prepared about the mountain city of Osh. Cody Conklin presented his research publication on the economic importance of sustainable mountain tourism in Utah and Austria, and the negative effects on it by the COVID pandemic.

Cody Conklin, UIMF member, presents on the economic impact of COVID-19 on Utah

As part of an established tradition during the international mountain day observations, the UIMF annually presents specially designated certificates from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization to all the contributors to sustainable mountain development. Due to the current challenges of the COVID pandemic, the certificates are going to be electronically delivered to the recipients and they were acknowledged at this time by reading their names. I had the honor of presenting the certificates to students. After which, I provided closing remarks wherein I thanked each of the speakers, the students whose preparations and efforts made the event possible, and the audience. We further invite everyone to participate with us during 2022 and next December at the thirteenth IMD observation at UVU.

Mr. Dallas Karren, UIMF President