

My Contribution to Visit of the Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations, Ambassador Kasymalieva at Utah Valley University



Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva speaking at UVU.

In international diplomacy, the successful organization of events and meetings is crucial for collaboration among nations. I had the privilege of contributing to the visit of the Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to the United Nations, Aida Kasymalieva on the 5th of December 2023. This essay outlines my personal contributions and reflections on the various responsibilities I undertook to ensure the success of this visit.

Ambassador Kasymalieva was hosted by the Utah Valley University office for Global Engagement. Members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU co-hosted the visit through a student-engaged learning (SEL) model. SEL lets

students coordinate activities under the mentorship of faculty. Stephen Atkinson, UIMF president, coordinated the activities.

My initial responsibilities were to gather video presentations from diverse sources to provide a comprehensive overview of mountainous regions and the Kyrgyz Republic. I received videos from Rotaractors in the Kyrgyz Republic. Dastan Abikov, CEO of the Neoplace, in Los Angeles, Aidana Nurlanova in the Kyrgyz Republic, faculty members Almaz Atabekov and Tatiana Pafilenko of Osh Technological University in the city of Osh, Kyrgyz Republic. In addition, I contacted former U.S. Congressman Joseph Pitts who represented Asbury University in Kentucky. This process aimed to offer a nuanced understanding of the diverse views and experiences relevant to the discussion.



Congressman Joseph Pitts on Zoom.

After gathering the videos, my next task was to set up a meeting for all participants. Ensuring a functional Zoom meeting was essential to the event. I dedicated time to troubleshooting potential technical issues that could impede communication during the event. Additionally, in case the Zoom meeting failed, I set the videos I received to be played in correct order.

On the day of the event, I helped set up the room and once the event was done clean it up. This involved putting up the chairs, podium, and flags in the room. This also included the technical aspect of setting up Zoom for the virtual participants and a camera to livestream the event through Facebook and record the event . During the hour-long presentation, I was in charge of recording the event. This recording serves as a resource for future reference and dissemination for all who are interested but were unable to attend in person.



Group photo. Ambassador Kasymalieva (center), Braden Birbara (far left).

A highlight of the experience was the opportunity to listen in a more intimate setting to Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva and faculty. Ambassador Aida Kasymalieva discussed the challenges and opportunities facing the Kyrgyz Republic and other mountain peoples. This gave me a deeper understanding of the issues in Central Asia, with faculty members posing questions and proposing solutions. It was a unique chance to watch professors I respect interact with a senior diplomat.

My involvement in facilitating the visit of Ambassador Kasymalieva was a rewarding experience. Although my contribution was small, I do believe it was essential. Beyond the technical and logistical aspects, I had the privilege of listening to a discussion that broadened my understanding of global affairs. This opportunity not only worked on my organizational and communication abilities but also deepened my appreciation for the efforts required to facilitate important events. I am grateful for the chance I had to contribute to this event, and I look forward to applying the skills and insights I gained from this to the future.

Braden Birbara, Vice-President, Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs at UVU