

Dylan Genes 11th Annual IMD 2020: Bringing communities together



The Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) has hosted another successful annual International Mountain Day (IMD) observation at Utah Valley University (UVU). The 11th annual IMD was put together and hosted entirely by students of UVU. With a theme focusing on preserving biodiversity in mountainous regions, yet again we were able to spotlight Utah and elsewhere through Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD).



Participants of the IMD 2020 observation at UVU

At the beginning of the event we were informed of the difficulties people face in rural mountainous daily living. On behalf of Dr. Butler, Professor Abdrisaev outlined mountain communities being some of the most under-appreciated and overlooked in the world, even considering what they bring to the table locally and internationally.

Next speaker was Anna Mahalak, a Youth Engagement Manager for UNA-USA. She spoke on helping young people operate within the UN and promote Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A prerecorded message from Dustin Liu, Youth Observer of UNA-USA taught the importance of preserving biodiversity and combating climate change was played for participants.



Dustin Liu, Youth Observer of UNA-USA speaks about biodiversity

The final speaker was the Orem Rotary President, Dean Robinson. The history and purpose of Rotary International and how to get involved with UVU's Rotaract club to contribute to service projects in communities and on a broader scale was discussed.

This event not only advocated the importance of mountain communities, but also adequately highlights the efforts and success of UVU's unique model of 'Student Engaged Learning' (SEL). SEL has allowed students like us to contribute directly and apply newfound skills attained in our coursework here at UVU, in practical application while being mentored by advisory university faculty.

My personal contribution to the event was in organizing protocol and reaching out to participants for information and confirmation. This allowed me to understand how to communicate best with potential colleagues and patrons of the Institution, and helped better lay the foundation to networking in more broad tasks involving the international community. Working closely with the new membership of the UIMF helped outline how to re-establish connections in grassroots projects while doing most everything remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I was able to help guide new leadership in successful transition and management of club activities.

New challenges offer new opportunities and UVU's SEL has done well to facilitate learning in these difficult times, as well as maintain the established tradition of the UIMF and globalization's interconnectivity with the international world.

Dylan Genes, President of Foreign Affairs Club