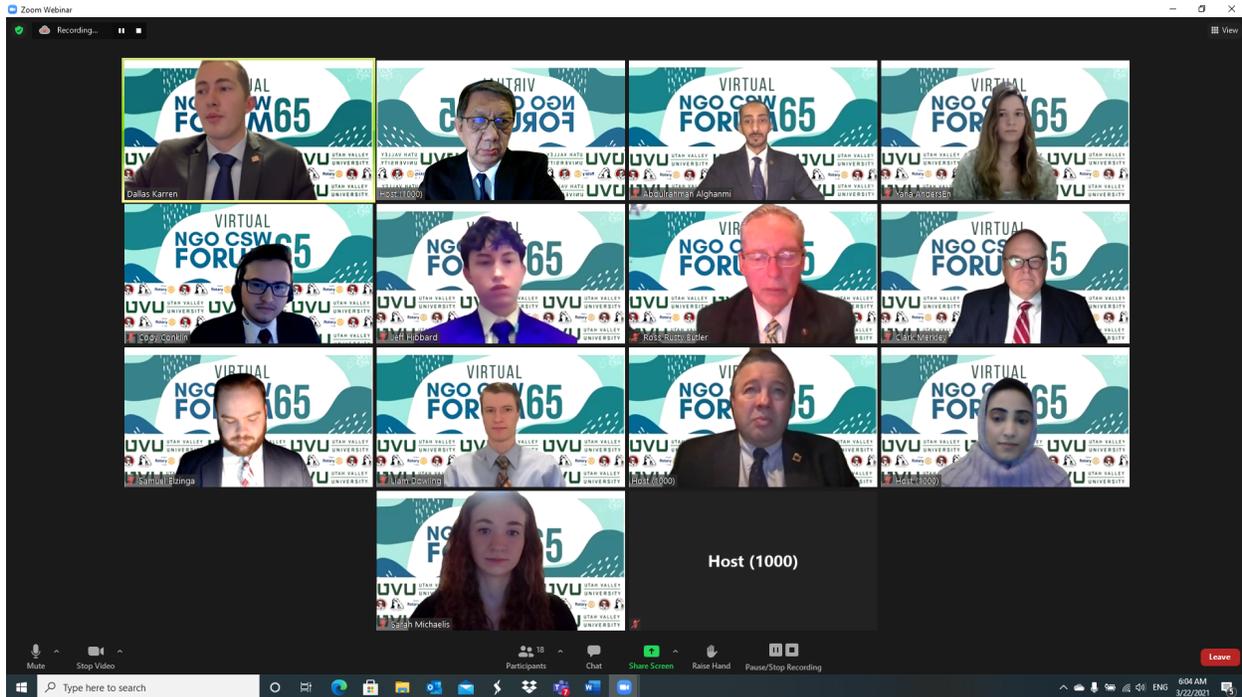


My Contribution to the Mountain Women Advocacy Through the-Student-Engaged Learning at the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women



Cody Conklin (far-left column & middle row) with peers and NGO representatives

On March 22nd, 2021 it was my pleasure to participate in a virtual panel of my peers during the parallel event titled “*Mountain Women Empowerment Through the Inclusive Student-Engaged Learning Model*” and make a statement in support of Mountain women and girls. These mountain communities and families are among the poorest and most neglected nationally and globally. It was my first time participating in the 65th session on the Commission on the Status of Women. Additionally, it was hosted in a Zoom meeting format on a global platform. Thankfully, we had few technical problems and each speaker was given the chance to speak and answer questions. We all had the opportunity to share how the Student-Engaged Learning (SEL) model helped us advocate for Mountain women at this highest-gender forum. SEL allows students to gain real-world skills while the professors act as guides. Given the quality of each of our statements, if the term SEL was not explicitly included in the event title, I would not have

thought that these were students, as everyone was professional and knowledgeable in their topic and their answers to questions. It goes to show how effective the SEL program can be even at a high-level event at the United Nations.



Cody Conklin presenting his statement at the event

As a non-traditional student, I was especially encouraged to participate in this SEL program. During preparations, I decided to join up with UVU Rotaract and helped raise funds. I felt inspired to leverage the contacts at my full-time employer BambooHR, I had a great response and was able to raise hundreds of dollars in support of UVU Rotaract’s Coats for Kids program. I also attended events with CSW65 Youth Series webinars to learn about advocacy for women and girls. I received strong support primarily from women, which made it worthwhile.

I was able to share my past research for Romania which was published in the UVU 2018 volume of the *Youth and the Mountains* academic journal. Using that basis, I shared positive examples of Sustainable Mountain Development in Romania such as the “Law of the Mountain”

passed in 2018, and recent developments to make the Southern Carpathian Mountains the next “Yellowstone.” In my statement, I included these words regarding mountain women: “While these environmental solutions in both of these countries are providing me more data and knowledge about SMD in those countries, my and our team’s main concern is about mountain women and communities. They have to be in the focus of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development targets and goals. We still need to work on achieving this goal and we hope that you all will support us.” This was the shared goal of all the participants. Overall, this experience has given me additional knowledge and experience. And not only helps me professionally but provides me with perspective and valuable insight into effective advocacy at the United Nations and institutions like the Commission on the Status of Women.

Cody Conklin, UIMF & UVU Rotaract