

SSDP Alumni Association Regional Leadership Board Elections 2016

Candidate: Mikayla Hellwich '10

Region: Northeast

Position: President, Vice President, Secretary

Hello, SSDP!

My name is Mikayla, and I live in Washington, D.C. I was a chapter leader for 3 years at the University of Maryland, and I'm currently the Secretary for the Mid-Atlantic region's Alumni Association. In the past, I've spoken at regional and international SSDP conferences about harm reduction and responsible partying, and this year I'll be speaking alongside a panel of amazing women about important professional skills and how to get a job. As Secretary so far, I've helped coordinate annual camping trips, alumni dinners, and conference fundraising events. This year, I'd like to be our region's President because I want to strengthen and expand the already incredible network of activists we have here and organize our communal resources to help us all grow and learn as activists, leaders, and friends.

One of the many reasons I adore SSDP is that the spirit of this organization cares so deeply about maintaining relationships between students and alumni. Because our network is strong in the DC area, as a student, I was able to connect with incredible people who led my chapter before me, people who challenged my ideas and changed policies, and who eventually helped connect me with future opportunities... people who are so passionate, motivated, and capable. They inspired me to be confident, authentic, and work hard towards my ideas and goals. I have always felt loved and accepted by SSDP, and I want to extend that same support to students. Above all else, I believe the Alumni Association keeps us connected to lifelong friends and powerful learning opportunities. I want all of us to feel a strong sense of community.

As President of this region, I will work on each of the four components/goals of the Alumni Association in the following ways:

—To improve connection, I want to create a regular 18+ happy hour in DC and work with chapters in each state to create a regular social meet-up in their respective areas. I also want to organize at least one large social gathering in/around DC per semester. My ultimate goal is a winter cabin trip.

— I believe friends can be some of our best mentors. To improve that role for regional alumni, I would assign myself, the other officers, and other alumni in the region to a chapter - their alma mater, if possible. The focus of each partnership would be to create strong friendships and a more local, familiar support system for each chapter.

—To improve our advocacy role, I will keep our region aware of what chapters are up to and connect them with opportunities to stand alongside students in political demonstrations and events.

—I will continue and improve our role as philanthropists by organizing and hosting bigger and better fundraisers in the region.

I will be honored if you select me to support our regional SSDP family again.

My infinite love and gratitude to you fabulous, magical people.

~Mikayla

