

Nicole Brager - Candidate for the 31st VAC BBG Morah

What is your vision for Virginia Council? What are three concrete steps you will take to achieve this vision, and why is this the direction in which we should go?

When I envision the upcoming year of VAC, I see an amazing, strong, and welcoming community that is driven by a collective goal to grow and celebrate our individualities. As we enter our thirty first year of VAC, our movement is poised to grow stronger than ever before, and as we grow, we must hold on to the foundation of our strength: our sisterhood. Throughout the past year, as we all faced moments of uncertainty and struggle the one thing that did not change was the strength of our movement. Whether in person or through a screen, we continued to strengthen and foster new and old relationships and did not let these unprecedented times get in the way of our sisterhood. In our thirty first year, VAC has the opportunity to increase not only in quantity of members, but also in quality, with a stronger community than ever before, through direct efforts to strengthen our sisterhood.

The first step to strengthening our community is prioritizing kindness and inclusivity in every aspect of BBG. To incorporate these values, we must remember that gaining a new member is not just an additional number, but an individual who has the opportunity to gain incredible experiences, and it is our role to guide them to get there. We must encourage chapters that when gaining prospects is not solely to grow closer to hitting a membership goal, but it is because we want to spread the love we are surrounded by. Through enhancing prospect communication, we will foster an environment that makes every new and potential member feel wanted and appreciated by their new chapter.

The second step to growing our sisterhood is through expanding connection not just within chapters and councils, but by strengthening regional relationships. Eastern Region is large and can often be overwhelming for new members, however; with the right introduction we can help foster relationships for new members throughout all of Eastern. This starts with our MIT/AIT convention. Prior to MIT/AIT I propose a "pen pal" program, in which each MIT will be assigned a "pal" from across the Region, having a few weeks to connect with a new member from a different council will break the tension and allow new members to feel more comfortable with one and other. Furthermore, we will incorporate Regional-sisterhood programming at every convention, from MIT-AIT onegs to ice breakers or Shabbat Services, by strengthening sisterhood programming our bonds will grow even more.

The final step to strengthening VAC BBG is to expand our demographic of BBGs and make joining BBYO a more feasible opportunity for all Jewish teens in surrounding areas. BBYO's greatest strength is the inclusive community it creates, and no matter who you are every Jewish teen should be given the opportunity to join our organization. Over this past year we have had to shift to connecting virtually, but this has allowed members in more distant communities to become more involved in BBYO. As we begin to shift back to in person programming and events in the upcoming year, the opportunity to be involved in BBYO should not be determined by location. With effective communication and hard work, we can work with teens in these distant areas to establish a thriving presence in smaller Jewish communities and give more teens an incredible experience in BBYO.

With the immense amount of passion and determination throughout the BBGs of VAC, I am confident that we can strengthen our community and the sisterhood we all love so much.