



APhA-ASP Regional Officer Elections

Candidate for Regional Delegate - Region 3



Isabella Ico

University of Florida College of Pharmacy
- Gainesville
isabella.ico@ufl.edu

Previous Leadership and Experience

My leadership journey in policy and advocacy began in high school, where I served on my city's youth council during my senior year. This experience taught me the power of a collective voice, as my colleagues and I successfully encouraged the allocation of funds for parks and recreation, addressing the needs of a growing population. It was here that I first realized the significant impact policy can have on communities.

In pharmacy school, I established a strong policy foundation as a committee member for our APhA-ASP chapter. By the end of my first year, I was elected Vice President of Policy-Elect. In this role, I represented the University of Florida as a Midyear Regional Meeting (MRM) chapter delegate and as a House of Delegates representative at the 2024 APhA Annual Convention, where I voiced our chapter's stance on proposed resolutions. Currently, as the Vice President of Policy in my third year, I lead a passionate team of student pharmacists, a group that has quadrupled in size under my leadership. Together, we have worked to increase engagement in the policy process within our chapter. On top of that, I have increased engagement with our local advocacy group, the Alachua County Association of Pharmacists (ACAP), by attending their monthly meetings with my policy team and encouraging their presence at student events alike. Beyond policy, I have held several leadership roles that demonstrate my readiness to serve as Region 3 delegate. I am a member of the University of Florida College of Pharmacy Dean's Leadership Council, where I work with one other student to provide the student perspective and influence leadership decisions at our college. In addition, I lead an infectious disease research project, guiding its progression and ensuring its successful presentation, including the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) conference in Barcelona, Spain that took place last summer. My leadership also extends to the University of Florida's Kappa Psi Pharmaceutical Fraternity in fall of 2022, where I served as pledge class president, leading first-year students in organizing events and fundraising initiatives. These diverse leadership experiences at the local, state, and national levels have equipped me with the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to represent our region effectively as a Regional Officer. I am committed to fostering collaboration, encouraging engagement in policy, and serving as a strong voice for my peers.

My leadership experiences, particularly within my local APhA-ASP chapter, have fully prepared me to serve as a Regional Officer. Over the past three years, I've been actively involved in the policy team, first as a committee member and later in leadership. This progression has given me a well-rounded perspective on both sides of the policy process—understanding the challenges faced by newcomers while also learning how to guide and mentor others. Having been both a rookie and a veteran, I am well-equipped to support others in their policy journeys, regardless of their experience. In my leadership roles, I have strived to be innovative, always seeking ways to engage students and broaden their involvement. For example, I collaborated with our campus's Student Society of Health System Pharmacist's Chapter to host a voter registration drive, successfully registering over 100 healthcare students. This initiative not only promoted civic engagement but also connected students to the broader impact of healthcare advocacy. Additionally, I have maintained a relationships with the Florida House of Representatives such as Representative Gallop Franklin and Senator Keith Perry, regularly facilitating interactions between students and local leaders. These events have helped students build valuable connections and engage with policymakers in a meaningful way, preparing them to be future advocates. Moreover, I've made a concerted effort to build connections with students from other chapters. Interacting with peers from different states has been one of the most rewarding aspects of attending APhA-ASP conferences. My roles as MRM delegate and House of Delegates representative at APhA Annual have allowed me to engage in meaningful discussions, gather feedback, and bring new ideas back to my own chapter. These experiences have shown me the value of open communication and collaboration across regions, which will be a priority for me as a Regional Officer. Finally, my passion for serving others is at the core of my desire to take on this role. Pharmacy has always been about helping people, and this same motivation drives my commitment to the APhA-ASP community. I am approachable, open to feedback, and eager to assist students from across the region in reaching their goals. I believe that by fostering collaboration and sharing knowledge, we can achieve collective success.

In summary, my leadership experiences, both within my chapter and on a broader scale, have equipped me with the skills, perspective, and drive to serve as an effective Regional Officer. I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to the continued growth and success of our region.

Talents and Skills

I am a team player, a skill developed through years of competitive volleyball prior to pharmacy school. This experience ingrained in me the value of teamwork, communication, and resilience. I thrive in collaborative environments and prefer working alongside others, which makes me an ideal fit for the region delegate position. I understand that challenges are inevitable in any team, but I believe the best way to overcome difficulties is by addressing them together. This mindset will help me foster strong partnerships within the organization.

A unique aspect of my background is that, throughout pharmacy school, I've worked in a fast-paced restaurant environment. This has enhanced my ability to engage in meaningful conversations with new people, improving my interpersonal and communication skills. These experiences have made me approachable, and I'm confident they will help me be accessible to others in this role. I'm outgoing and genuinely care about the well-being of those around me, and I aim to make myself a helpful, supportive resource for my peers as a regional delegate.

Advocating confidently is a skill I have cultivated over time. Through my experiences, I have learned to harness the collective voice of my peers and adapt it for the common good in a respectful manner. I eagerly anticipate engaging with local and state legislators, as I have learned that effectively delivering messages and nurturing relationships with our leaders can drive meaningful change. From my role as a class representative in my first year to my current position as my chapter's Policy Vice President, I have consistently been a trusted confidant and leader for my classmates.

Additionally, I pride myself on being well-rounded. While I may not be an expert in all things, my diverse experiences in both pharmacy and outside work environments give me a broad perspective. I'm always eager to learn from others, and I see this role as an opportunity to both contribute and grow. I want to help others succeed in their roles while gaining new knowledge to further my own development.

Overall, my teamwork, communication, and leadership abilities, combined with my openness to new experiences, make me well-suited to serve as a regional delegate. I look forward to using these qualities to support others, collaborate effectively, and make a positive impact.

Plans as a Regional Delegate

I aim to enhance the transparency of the resolution process within APhA-ASP. Each year, a gray area persists that hinders the drafting process. I propose utilizing our time at the Student Leadership Institute (SLI) to brainstorm resolution ideas. This proactive approach will allow schools to start the academic year with relevant topics, ensuring that the resolution writing process is thorough and not rushed.

Additionally, I envision fostering greater collaboration among schools in the region. As a region delegate, I plan to host quarterly "Policy Pep Talks" to gain insights from other policy teams and state representatives about current legislative trends. This exchange of knowledge is vital, as varying state legislation influences the priorities of different regions, and expanding our understanding of national pharmacy issues benefits all student pharmacists.

I believe it's also essential to enhance collaboration in updating The Capsule between the Speaker of the House, Policy Standing Committee, and region delegates. Currently, it serves as a foundational resource for newcomers to the policy process, and we can improve it by providing more detailed guidance for Policy Vice Presidents.

In all these efforts, I remain committed to empowering fellow students to equally contribute toward advocating for the greater good.

As an APhA-ASP Regional Delegate, my goal is to broaden student pharmacists' involvement in the Policy Process and advocacy beyond chapter delegates and policy vice presidents by fostering excitement and a sense of ownership in their profession. One effective way to achieve this is by creating healthy competition across schools. I propose a Region 3-specific Political Action Committee (PAC) competition to encourage students from all chapters to contribute to policy initiatives. This competition could be structured with tangible rewards, such as recognition at regional meetings or on social media, which would motivate students to engage. By using social media polls and tracking the progress of different schools, we can instill a sense of competition and pride, driving more widespread involvement.

Additionally, I think that leveraging existing leadership roles and events could incentivize student participation. For example, at my own chapter, I've extended involvement beyond the policy team by inviting all students to attend our city hall proclamation, creating a more inclusive environment for advocacy. Collaborating with existing events to integrate policy and advocacy discussions is a natural and successful way to integrate policy into other areas of APhA-ASP. This approach would ensure that students who may not typically engage with policy still encounter these important topics in settings they're already participating in, making advocacy a more natural part of their professional development. As Regional Delegate, I would work to replicate similar efforts across the region, encouraging chapters to involve all students in local advocacy events such as legislative days, town halls, or policy discussions, whether virtual or in-person.

Lastly, increasing collaboration between chapters can further enhance engagement. Hosting quarterly "Policy Pep Talks" or roundtable discussions with schools across Region 3 would allow students to share ideas, success stories, and challenges. These conversations could focus on trending issues in healthcare and policy, inspiring students to bring new initiatives to their own chapters.

By fostering competition, collaboration, and education, I believe we can engage a broader range of students in the APhA-ASP Policy Process and advocacy efforts, ensuring that every student pharmacist feels empowered to contribute to the future of their profession.