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Cendy Gonzalez works for student vote

Summary:

(October 20, 2004)-By Jackie Thrasher '05, UMM News Service -- "My vote doesn't count." That's the general sentiment you hear among young people when asked why they don't vote.

Don't tell that to University of Minnesota, Morris senior Cendy Gonzalez. She is working hard to tell people otherwise. One can tell, for example, just by the various organizations to which she belongs: UMM College Republicans, Minnesota College Republicans, and College Republican National Committee. She also volunteers with the Stevens County Republicans, the Republican Party of Minnesota, the Bush-Cheney '04 campaign, and the College Republican National Committee. She spent her summer working on the successful McHenry for Congress campaign in North Carolina.

When asked why she is involved so heavily in politics she replied, "I vote, I follow current events, I have opinions that deserve to be heard. I'm sure other young voters feel the same way. What better way to voice our opinion than to vote?"

Gonzalez recently took part in two panels, both of which addressed the issues among young voters. The first, part of Newsweek magazine's Campaign 2004 series, was composed of six experts on the youth vote. The panelists were asked questions such as "Do people have to be fiercely partisan to care enough to vote?" To which Gonzalez replied, "[Youth] can make an election we just need to start doing it more often." She followed her reply by citing as an example the election of former Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura. Studies indicated, according to Gonzalez, that college students determined the election outcome.

The other panel in which she took part was The National Symposium on Youth Civic Engagement at the University of Virginia. As a representative of the College Republican National Committee, Gonzalez joined panelists from various organizations such as Rock the Vote in answering questions about young people and the 2004 election.

Although these panel participations and volunteer efforts are hard work, Gonzalez feels that they are rewarding. "I think this work is important to everyone. More specifically, it's important to me because I want politicians to cater to my needs as a young constituent," she said.

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