

Democrats Abroad China – Officer Elections for 2019-2020

Below are the candidates running for the Leadership Board of Democrats Abroad China. We include details such as their candidate statement, which positions they have been nominated for, their contact information, and endorsements.

Note that floor nominations will be accepted during the **Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Sunday April 14, 2019 from 1-3 pm**. Voting will occur first for the eleven members of the Leadership Board, and after they are confirmed, officers will be elected from those eleven. Thus, **all voting will occur during the AGM for DA China members attending either in person or through WebEx**. Please save the date, and register as a DA China member if you haven't done so already! Stay tuned for more information about the election format.

We ask that in the weeks leading up to the election that conversations about the candidates remain respectful in the public spaces provided by DA China. We invite any DA member to submit further endorsements to the NEC (email any or all of us listed below) by April 11 for any of the listed candidates – we will compile and share these to DA a few days before the AGM.

We look forward to your participation – please come and vote, and help decide the future of Democrats Abroad in China!

All the best,

The Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC)
Melinda Yang (melyang@ivpp.ac.cn)
James Barnard (james.barnard@mac.com)
Lisa Movius (lmovius@hotmail.com)

The candidates are listed alphabetically by first name.

1. Aaron Kruse
2. Alexander Lee
3. Brian Kloosterman
4. Brittini Young
5. Christopher Zombik
6. Devika Koppikar
7. Eileen Walsh
8. Elaine Chow
9. Elizabeth Jenkins
10. Faith Gary
11. Justin Fischer
12. Kim Wong
13. Nicholas Bonvini
14. Nicholas Gowan
15. Patrick Cranley
16. Sarah Kimmet

Aaron Kruse

Running for:

1. **Chair**
2. **Vice-Chair**
3. **Communications Director**

Statement

Candidate Statement: About 15 minutes after I was elected Chair of DA China, Ada Shen, the "founding mother" of our country committee, congratulated me and said: "So you're planning to go to the global meeting in Washington, DC in two weeks, right?" I hadn't been planning to attend, but I bought tickets that same day. And that's pretty much how my life has gone since then.

Over the past two years our leadership team has put in an incredible amount of work, and every single member deserves a huge commendation for their efforts in setting up a functioning country committee. As Chair, I've stayed focused on only one goal: Building up an organization that can help Americans living in China get involved so that more Democrats in the US are elected to office. If elected as Chair for a second term, I will build upon our progress by organizing chapters outside of Beijing and Shanghai and improving our GOTV efforts so that we are well-prepared for success in 2019 and 2020.

Endorsement: I would like to take the time here to nominate Aaron for another term on the leadership board, being Chair of a new country committee is not easy work, it took patience and determination and I know Aaron has and will continue to give DA China his all. - Samantha Wong

Endorsement: I am happy to nominate Aaron Kruse for re-election as Chair of Democrats Abroad China. - Faith Geary

Endorsement: Aaron has put a ton of effort into Democrats Abroad. His level of commitment and focus has really kept me motivated over the last two years. I have known Aaron since May 2017, when we were both elected to the leadership board of Democrats Abroad China. He has taken the role of Chair extremely seriously. He presents himself professionally and is not only an

Candidate List- Aaron Kruse

assertive leader, but also attentive to those around him. He is careful to consider the process as well as the final product in project management, which is helpful in delegating and prioritizing tasks. He really gets things done.

He is also a nice boy from Iowa, earnest and diligent. He is genuinely passionate about building the organization so that we can make a difference in the world. He is willing to put in the time to ensure an event or project is successful. In addition to leading our team in China, he has also volunteered for very time-consuming committees at the global level of DA. I have no idea how many hours he must have logged on conference calls with DA in the past 2 years.

I am very pleased to endorse Aaron Kruse for the leadership board.

- Elizabeth Jenkins

Email: aaronmkruse@gmail.com

Alexander Lee

Running for:

1. **Legal Counsel**
2. **At Large (non officer position)**

Statement

Candidate Statement: Alexander Lee lived in NH for nine years, where he was the chairman of the Concord City Democrats and the Merrimack County Democrats. He worked on the 2004 campaign of Howard Dean, MD, and even ran a Presidential campaign for Dal LaMagna for the nine days that he was in the race! He has worked to build a small cadre of American Democrats in the Mainland Pearl River Delta who can register voters and encourage absentee voting. He thinks the DCCC and DNC have played favorites and wants to play a role in making sure our democracy has a level playing field. When he took the most recent "political Rorschach test", he came out thinking that AOC and her sisters looks like a bunch of roses.

Alexander is a graduate of Middlebury College and has both a JD and masters in environmental law from Vermont Law School. He went to Phillips Exeter Academy with Andrew Yang, the current Presidential candidate. Climate change is and has always been his driving concern, followed by peace work. He was on the Colbert Report and on the front page of the WSJ twice for his leadership role in Project Laundry List, an energy conservation group that he founded in 1995. He teaches US History, Latin I, and academic writing at an international program at a top high school in Guangzhou and has lived in China for six years, traveling to more than ninety cities--each bigger than his home state of Vermont.

Endorsement: Alexander Lee has made an important effort to activate members in the Pearl River Delta region of China. As an organization, it is challenging for DA China to establish a significant presence outside Beijing/Shanghai and it would be fantastic to have a member of the leadership board focused on the Pearl River Delta. It is also rare to have a candidate who has held previous positions in the Democratic Party structure. I am happy to endorse Alexander Lee for the leadership board. – Elizabeth Jenkins

Wechat ID: aplsauce

Brian Kloosterman

Running for:

1. **At Large** (non-officer position)

Statement

Candidate Statement: The democratic process works when we the people listen to each other and treat each other with care and respect. We prosper when we uphold the principals of opportunity, openness, and equality without yielding at any moment.

I first became involved with the Democrats in 2004 with my primary concerns being LGBT rights, anti-war, mass incarceration, and the end of poverty. I am from several generations of Detroiters though I only lived there a few years as my father was stationed in different places often. Later, when my mom became a single mother, I watched her work incredibly hard to put herself through college and start her own small dog boarding business that kept us fed. She gave me my love of learning that allowed me to receive my education in Computer Science, Visual Arts, Philosophy, and Dance with my Master's in Education.

Each of our experiences is unique. Each contributes to the democratic process. I know that we need to create opportunities for every person in the world, not only for Americans. I want to help the community of Democrats in China have an opportunity to contribute their experience. We will each inform and form our government one vote at a time.

In a couple of years, I plan to return to Detroit to participate in my home community with my wife and daughter. I want to serve our community here in the meantime. I do not naturally seek positions of authority, but I frequently remind myself of Grace Lee Boggs said: "We must be the leaders we've been looking for."

Endorsement: Brian Kloosterman has made a significant effort at activating members in Kunming. He successfully organized the first gathering of members in the city and voter support during around the mid term elections. I am very pleased to endorse Brian for the leadership board. – Elizabeth Jenkins

Wechat ID: driftinspaceime

Brittini Young

Running for:

- 1. Chair
- 2. Communications Director

Statement

Candidate Statement: How are we speaking with Americans living abroad? Conversations are brewing across the table some are productive, and others may send us into a mind numbing trance. However, we can agree the way we communicate, and interact as strangers or fellow citizens has evolved with the advancement of technology. Unfortunately so, technology has outpaced the progress of social, environmental, and economic issues our predecessors have fought and died for. While living abroad we may tend to neglect our civil rights such as voting, a right people of other nations wished they possessed. Many including myself have set aside this vital right while living abroad at some point. We see the red tape of trying to stay engaged with our vote or unaware that a community exists to help us stay connected.

When an American comes to explore the richness of another culture the Democrats Abroad in China will be ready to welcome and assist them in transitioning, and connecting with the American community. The first contact with a piece of home can aid in bringing people from all sides of the table together. After living in China for three years I've witnessed how we could develop our outreach so we can stay connected with our home and democracy as a community abroad.

As the possible Chair or Communications Director for the Democrats Abroad China I would collaborate with the leadership board and members to effectively connect and communicate with a diverse group of people. I will use my skills to intertwine technology and traditional forms of outreach with aims to bring an excitement for citizens to get involved and stay involved. We will also work in creating opportunities to open and support new caucuses in order to outreach to a broader community that's reflective of the Democratic Party.

My professional and educational experience will assist me with my duties to work with the leadership board. During my undergrad at Texas State University I

studied International Studies with a focus in Asia. In 2014 I had a wonderful opportunity to intern at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, China which brought a wealth of experience, friendships, and memories working in the Public Affairs Section. Through this internship and other positions focused on marketing and outreach I've accumulated skills for connecting, communicating, and building long-term relationships with people. As well, I have created a network of relationships which would help to increase involvement in the Democrats Abroad China.

This blue Texan from one of the reddest states is testament of how we must begin to view things through different angles in order to see the complex nature of people beyond the limited projection imposed by a few individuals. I look forward to building a brighter community abroad, which supports the inclusive and fundamental values of the Democratic Party of America.

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Christopher Zombik

Running for:

1. **At Large** (non officer position)

Statement

Candidate Statement: I have served DA China since before it was even officially formed, as a "super volunteer" in Shanghai helping to run voter information, registration, and social events during the 2016 election. Elected as a Leadership Board member in the first DACN elections in 2017, I have continued in my role of helping to grow and strengthen this important organization so that Americans in China can have their voices heard and Democrats back home can win more elections. With a presidential election year fast approaching, it is crucial that DACN leadership is experienced, reliable, and dedicated to the cause. I am unwavering on all of these points, and look forward to the opportunity to keep serving DACN members during this historic time for democracy.

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Devika Koppikar

Running for:

1. Communications Director

Statement

Candidate Statement: I am a former congressional Democratic press secretary who now works as a teacher in China. I hope to use my skills in communications, writing, media relations and media training to continue building up DA China. Our great American ship has hit an iceberg and we need to do everything within our power to prevent it from sinking. With the Democratic nominations for 2020 around the corner, our team needs to stay on top of the issues and inform our fellow Americans in China to stay involved with our great democracy.

Endorsement: Devika traveled several hours to join our AGM last year and has a wealth of experience that would be valuable for DA China. She is eager to find ways to help members stay engaged and make a difference, and I think she would be a huge asset to the leadership team. - Aaron Kruse

Wechat ID: DevikaKo

Eileen Walsh

Running for:

1. **At Large** (non officer position)

Statement

Candidate Statement: My name is Eileen Walsh and I am running for an At-Large position on the leadership board. Before moving to Beijing, I lived in Al Ain, a city in Abu Dhabi, and voted through Democrats Abroad there. I have been in Beijing since August, 2016, teaching at Daystar Academy. Through my membership in DACN, I have found friendship as well as opportunities to become involved in U.S. politics. I appreciate how important voter registration is to DACN, which is illustrated by the relentless efforts to make sure people are registered to vote, as well as assistance with casting ballots. I have benefitted from voter registration and voting assistance and I would like to repay those benefits by continuing on my journey of involvement with DACN.

When President Obama was elected, I was proud of my country for having elected him. I felt that our country was in good hands and did not think much about politics, to be honest. With the current administration running the show, I realize that regardless of who is in the White House, being involved in politics is essential. The buck doesn't stop in the Oval Office; we all bear responsibility for how our country is run and must be involved in how it is run. We can't leave things to one president or one administration. I accept that responsibility and would like the opportunity to continue and expand my participation in our country's governance by serving the members of Democrats Abroad China as a Member-at-Large.

Endorsement: I am so pleased to endorse Eileen Walsh for the leadership board. Over the last two years, I have come to expect to see her at every Democrats Abroad event in Beijing. She almost always attends and participates actively. I can easily recall her participating in election watch parties, voter trainings, women's caucus events, and book clubs. I think she would be an excellent addition to the leadership board. - Elizabeth Jenkins

Wechat ID: emwalsh

Elaine Chow

Running for:

- 1. **Communications Director**
- 2. **At Large** (non-officer position)

Statement

Candidate Statement: Hello everyone, I'm Elaine - originally a New Yorker (and now a registered voter in Maryland) with a long history of volunteering in various organizations, both political and charitable. I began getting involved with Democrats Abroad China soon after the 2016 election, and am now excited to work with the passionate people I've met here in a more organized capacity. I've been living in China on-and-off since 1997, where amongst other things I've founded a charity to connect Chinese minority children to educational opportunities, run Shanghaiist.com (one of the most read English-language websites on China), and managed marketing strategy & creative teams for several Fortune 100 clients. In my most recent foray out of China, I became President of my MBA class at the University of Cambridge, where I also helped manage communications activities for an Education funding initiative for Kenyan elementary schools and media relations for a government-sponsored event connecting Silicon Valley to UK entrepreneurs.

I'm running now for the Director of Communications and Information Technology position. As a long-time journalist and marketing executive used to running highly agile teams across multiple media platforms, I hope my experience and skill sets can help push awareness of DA China and its content to the next level.

My Goals Are:

- To upgrade our digital platforms to push outreach further
- To help create and schedule more captivating content
- To build a strategic framework for social media & SEO that raises our engagement, with KPI
- To interface with media and other organizations to help support our voter registration initiatives

Endorsement: I have been friends with Elaine for over 6 years now and she is competent, passionate, and dedicated to Democrats Abroad. She was one of

the few members from China to attend the AsiaPac Convention. We always talk about politics and care deeply for our country and want systemic positive social change. She is articulate and detailed and can explain highly complicated topics into little nuggets that are digestible for all. I have seen her in many other fun roles such as a bilingual host for events, and even beyond the excellent work ethic, she's just funny and a pleasure to work with and be around. As an added bonus, she was able to get in touch with her cousin Krista Suh (Creator of the Pussyhat) to help me coordinate and record a video for DA China. I am more than sure she can contribute a lot to 2020 in Beijing. - Kimberley Wong

Wechat ID: elainification

Elizabeth Jenkins

Running for:

- 1. **Chair**
- 2. **Vice-Chair**
- 3. **Secretary**
- 4. **Communications Director**
- 5. **At Large** (non officer position)

Statement

Candidate Statement: I was elected Secretary of Democrats Abroad China in 2017, and was active in managing our digital assets (email, online forms, wechat, facebook, wiki) as well as event planning. I also served as the Asia Pacific Regional GOTV Coordinator. I am a registered Democrat in Michigan, where I was born, and a University of Michigan alumna. I first traveled to China in 1999 and started studying Chinese in Kunming at Yunnan Shifan Daxue in 2006. Based in Beijing since October 2012, I worked as the Head of Analytics for Greenpeace East Asia and now take care of my 4-year-old daughter full time. I am a veteran of progressive politics and the labor movement, having worked in data and communications for organizations like Planned Parenthood and the Service Employees International Union. I am running for DA China leadership again because I can dedicate the time and energy to continuing to build our outreach and impact.

Endorsement: I strongly endorse Elizabeth as a leader for Democrats Abroad. She has extensive organizing experience and has been an instrumental part of DA China for the past two years. She is always prepared to take on shirked responsibilities and do things beyond her role in order to make our events and outreach successful. She's spent an incredible amount of time helping to respond to voters, reaching new members, and making sure that our country committee is compliant with the requirements from the global organization. When I need help on something related to DA she's the first person I think of, and she is certain to bring her experience to bear on our organizing efforts in 2020. – Aaron Kruse

Wechat ID: elizaj

Faith Gary

Running for:

1. Communications Director

Statement

Candidate Statement: I am both humbled and pleased to accept the nomination as Director of Communications and Technology for Democrats Abroad China (DACN). Allow me to offer details about my qualifications for this position.

For the past two years I have been an active member of DACN. In my capacity as an at-large board member, I have regularly attended meetings and events in support of our mission.

Beyond that, I organized DACN participation in events surrounding the movie premiere of “Black Panther” last year, as a way to draw in discussion of diverse American political issues.

I have also conducted focus groups to communicate with potential Democratic Party voters living in China, in an effort to gain insight on what attracts and what repels these voters. I recognized after 2016 that this demographic represents numbers that could swing an election in either direction. The efforts have been quite revealing, in that I’ve come to understand the importance of presenting a coherent message about what the Democratic Party has to offer. Leading up to the 2020 elections, literally *NOTHING* is more important than making our positions and offerings clear to the voting public, both domestic and abroad.

This is the work of a Communications Director; not an easy task. Yet I stand ready and equipped to accept the challenge. I am a teacher here in China, but my original major - a subject I happen to love - is Communications. The idea of putting my talents, energy, and passion to work for DACN excites and motivates me.

I have no question about what I am prepared to do to advance Democratic

ideals for the United States of America. The only question that remains, is will you accept me?

Endorsement: Faith Gary is a pillar of the community, who contributes and volunteers in every capacity. She donates her time online and offline to the Democratic Party and takes the mission of organization to heart. She takes it upon herself to moderate disagreements, and remind us all of our common purpose. She never fails to be civil, to communicate clearly, and to treat all parties as human.

I am nominating her position of communications director (though she could probably excel in any number of roles) because of her ability to craft a powerful message that presents herself and the Democratic Party in the best light, and can impartially mediate between internal parties. She is dedicated, aware of events, and more than capable of keeping all members informed.

While faith over reason is an affliction that has infected our politics, faith in Faith and her abilities is empirically justified. - Jesse Slater

Endorsement: Faith is one of the most respected leaders on the current DA China leadership team, and bring clear-headed thinking to difficult situations. She's been a very positive influence on me, and on many other members of DA China. She also helps us stay focused on the activism that we can do in the present to have an impact, and inspires others to learn about issues that are often lost in political conversation. - Aaron Kruse

Email: faithgary@live.com

Justin Fischer

Running for:

- 1. **Communications Director**
- 2. **At Large** (non officer position)

Statement

Candidate Statement: I am uniquely qualified for the position of Communications Director. Communications has been my line of work for the past 13 years. I have worked in print and digital media and served as the Managing Editor at two of Shanghai's best-known English publications: SmartShanghai and CityWeekend. I have also served as the Marketing Manager of an e-commerce start-up, where I oversaw the creation of content and messaging and established brand awareness by organizing offline events and community building. I currently hold a leadership position at GHC, a regional PR and Communications firm, where I help international clients craft their messaging and build awareness in China.

I have lived in Shanghai since 2005, but I'm a newcomer to Democrats Abroad. As with so many of us, 2016 was a pivotal year for me. I grew increasingly frustrated at the state of affairs back home. Being in China, I couldn't go to a protest. I couldn't canvas. I couldn't convince people to sign petitions. Last summer, I reached out to Vice Chair Sam Wong and asked her to put me to work. I started devoting weekend afternoons to helping Americans register to vote in the 2018 midterm election. I took concrete actions to contribute to the results of that election. It was an empowering and rewarding experience.

After helping register voters, I organized and promoted the viewing party for the 2018 election that Democrats Abroad held at The Camel sports bar. In January of this year, I helped organize and promote a viewing party for the 2018 documentary "RBG" about Justice Ginsburg. After the viewing, I moderated a group discussion about the film and about the Equal Rights Amendment. I look forward to organizing similar events so we can get more like-minded Americans together and build a more informed and engaged electorate abroad.

Endorsement: Justin has been an amazing source of support this past year.

Candidate List- Justin Fischer

When no one else was up for taking on GOTV tables, he was there almost every other weekend tabling. Since then he has been the first to volunteer this help when needed and has taken the initiative on planning and supporting events for our general membership in Shanghai. - Samantha Wong

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Kim Wong

Running for:

- 1. Treasurer
- 2. At Large (non officer position)

Statement

Candidate Statement: Hi everyone! My name is Kim and I'm a registered voter in New Jersey. I have been in China for the past 8 years as mostly an entrepreneur doing things that I am a fervent believer in, primarily healthy lifestyle (through food), personal development, and design. I built out the restaurant chains Sproutworks and ban ban in both Shanghai and Beijing, as well as being an involved community member in all the communities that crossed over with any of my aforementioned interests. I made some big changes in the past year which included leaving the restaurants to have more time to dedicate to different pursuits, and am currently am serving as a operations director at an interior design firm, as well as about to launch my first clothing line and art show in the near future. I am passionate, extremely resourceful, and effective because I enjoy DOING. I believe that if we are privileged enough to be of service to others, it is a basic responsibility that a human being should contribute what they can to create positive social change in a financially sustainable way. It is the reason why I have done everything thus far in my life, and why I am very interested in furthering the cause of Democrats Abroad.

In 2016 after the elections I was devastated. I am not one to just complain though, because I know that actions speak much louder than words. I was reminded that I needed to "Be the change that you wish to see in the world", and got quickly to work. I offered to host the voter registration in Shanghai in 2016 at my restaurant Sproutworks, and was able to reach out to Krista Suh, political activist and creator of the Pussyhat, to find time in her busy schedule to record a video clip encouraging voters in Beijing and Shanghai to get out to register to vote. The additional pr that we got given with the video clip across English media in China helped us achieve over 100 registered voters for midterm elections, and ranked us at #3 worldwide. I have then also taken on the role of Women's Caucus Chair in Shanghai, and helped organize 2 other

events including securing sponsored prizes and venue support.

That is just the start. I really want to do even more which is why I am interested in becoming a board member, particularly as Treasurer. With my existing network and ability to think both strategically and operationally, and if elected, these are the fresh ideas I want to bring to the table:

- Spearhead fundraising initiatives with venues in both Shanghai and Beijing through groups of volunteers (Example: run an event with a fee about “New Accounting Laws for US Citizens and Application”)
- Attend calls with relevant Global DA support to get more ideas for fundraising, and apply it with a China focus.
- Organize resources (venue support into lists to simplify any logistical support for any caucus or event) for Democrats
- After more money is fundraised, help decide what is the best way to use this money to create fun events or products that can help Americans get excited, motivated, and involved with Democrats Abroad (T-shirts, More Pins)
- Reach out to relevant communities (potentials: American Club Shanghai, etc.) to help us get more connected with Americans.

Endorsement: Kim has shown up in a big way this past year. She has been one of the first to volunteer her help when needed and took the initiative to plan and host events for our general membership in Shanghai from International women's day to supporting the RBG documentary showing in support of the annual women's march. Kim would be an amazing addition to the leadership board. - Sam Wong

Wechat ID: cukimber

Nicholas Bonvini

Running for:

1. Communications Director

Statement

Candidate Statement: My name is Nico and I am interested in becoming the next communications director of Democrats Abroad China. I believe that clarity and accuracy are of utmost importance when expressing ones values. Having worked teaching debate and case analysis in China for 2 years, I know how important it is to understand one’s audience and plan the message before delivering it. I have never seen America in such a state as today, where facts don’t seem to matter as much as they used to. I believe that to win the next election we need to harness the power of our words to inspire. We need to change the course by bringing people together and get them excited about creating something new. I look forward to sharing the exciting new ideas of the Democrats in China, where life moves at an incomparable pace, with the world.

Wechat ID: Nicobonvini

Nicholas Gowan

Running for:

1. Communications Director

Statement

Candidate Statement: Has not formally accepted the nomination or provided a statement.

Endorsement: Nick has experience running multiple Wechat groups - including the wildly popular Meme 京 group as well as many spinoffs of the 京 group sphere. Most of the groups that Nick runs or is involved in are active daily (if not hourly), mostly due to Nick’s personal, millennial approach to modding.

As communications director, I believe Nick could bring that same energy to the DA China chat.

I understand that Nick currently has a controversial reputation with the current DA leadership - due to an incident involving him and another member. Nick’s brand isn’t sanitized, he is an active participant, not an aloof arbiter. He takes the role of a community leader who drives all members to feel more actively invested in the day to day discussions, leading by example. When said member was calling all Bernie supporters “losers” and implying they had no integrity, Nick was there to discredit him directly. Nick knows that when radicals and “trolls” are ranting online, it doesn’t work to simply prove their arguments wrong, not in 2019. You discredit the speaker, making them the butt of a joke that eventually the whole community buys into. They are then rendered harmless and unable to further disrupt future discussion. The ability tap into and direct the “soul” of a group is why Nick has been such an effective moderator of the many groups he runs to this day. - Andrew Ni

Wechat ID: Neekered

Patrick Cranley

Running for:

- 1. **Treasurer**
- 2. **At-large** (non officer position)

Statement

Candidate Statement: Hello China Dems – I’m Patrick Cranley, long-time resident of Shanghai and a consistent Democratic voter in Maryland, with close family in California, Montana, New York and Nevada. I run my own consulting business and served as an officer of the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai for five years. I have worked on Democratic campaigns in the U.S. and raised money for the Democratic Party in China, and have been an enthusiastic participant in Democrats Abroad China activities since its re-energizing a few years ago. Our organization needs an experienced, trustworthy treasurer, and I would be delighted to serve in that capacity if you and our fellow members elect me to the DA China Executive Committee.

Endorsement:Patrick Cranley is level-headed and trustworthy with decades of business experience. I think he would serve DACN well as member of the board in the treasurer position. — Jim Spear, DACN Treasurer 2017-2019

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Sarah Kimmet

Running for:

1. **At-large** (non officer position)

Statement

Candidate Statement: I am a writer and educator who moved to China in 2011 after completing my PhD in American Literature at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am currently registered to vote in Washington, DC, but I grew up in North Louisiana. My grandfather was governor of Louisiana during the Civil Rights Era, a Democrat and a populist—a poor boy who grew up in rural poverty. One of the things he taught me was that no one succeeds alone, that the help we receive needs to be help that we give so that everyone succeeds alike.

Through my work with Chinese university and high school students, I have had many opportunities to promote dialogue and solidarity on important global issues like income inequality, climate change, and women’s rights. These opportunities have been impactful for all of us as we take up the important task of understanding our responsibilities as global citizens. But the results of the 2016 presidential election were a devastating wake-up call for me, as they were for many other Americans on the left. I was reminded of how important it is to fight the fight on all fronts, not to become disengaged from the country where I have the greatest political voice.

Running for DA member-at-large is one way I am trying to hold myself accountable from afar. But whether or not I am elected, I plan to continue to support other members of the DA as we help the Shanghai community become more active in real space and outside of major election cycles. One of the ways we hope to do this is by holding monthly meetings that address current issues and activism, and I’m excited that this has already started happening with the Shanghai Women’s Caucus. In addition to helping each other vote, we need to encourage each other to stay connected to our representatives, to our country’s issues, and to like-minded Americans—to create solidarity through community.

We all know that this is a pivotal moment in the U.S. and in the world, one in

which corporate interests and corrupt governments are leaving the people behind, not to mention destroying our beautiful planet. The scope of these problems makes it easier for all of us to feel powerless, to disengage and go into survival mode. I am impassioned about doing all I can to make sure that this doesn't happen to me or to anyone else with whom I come in contact. We must stay committed to the power of our individual voices to counteract greed and self-absorption, to advance the always achievable dream of a more compassionate and equitable world.

Endorsement: Sarah has been a vocal and engaged member over the last two years I have served as Secretary for Democrats Abroad. I am pleased to endorse her for the DA China Leadership Board. - Elizabeth Jenkins

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