

Former Disney TV star brings passion to College Debate 2016

If Hallie Lou Balch's story sounds like something out of Disney – a young aspiring actress whose life evolved from the theater to the football field to the political arena at Dominican – it might be because she was indeed once a Disney star herself.

Hallie '18, a double major in [Political Science](#) and [Communications](#) in the [School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences](#), was for three years host of Game On, a Disney Channel television show dedicated to discussing video games.

Now, at Dominican, Hallie is discussing political views through [College Debate 2016](#), a national, non-partisan initiative to empower young voters to identify issues and engage peers in the upcoming presidential election. Hallie is one of more than 130 student delegates from college campuses across the country who will convene for a town hall meeting at Dominican in September.

Hallie's passion is to be a Legislative Analyst. Skills gained in her political science and communications tracks will help prepare her to monitor and analyze activities established by local, state and federal government.

College Debate 2016 is focused on issues and policies.

"I like that college students can unite across the nation and decide what is most important to us," says Hallie, who is a student ambassador and vice president of Associated Students of Dominican University. "Social media is huge for millennials and I think that when we use it to talk about something positive and something that can influence our future - rather than just sharing cat videos or pictures of dogs in sunglasses – we're utilizing it in the best way."

Hallie has been active on social media and in media in general. But her [IMDb profile](#) doesn't begin to tell her story.

As a child, she performed as a theater actress. When she was 15, she auditioned for Disney. Producers and a director remembered her from earlier auditions and three months later hired her.

A Hallie Lou Balch Fan Club was created on Facebook, yet soon Hallie also received attention and fans while pursuing other endeavors. As a senior, Hallie beat out two boys and became the kicker on her high school's football team. She converted 24 of 28 points after touchdown kicks and booted a 36-yard field goal.

"Football," says Hallie, a student-athlete at Dominican, "taught me that you can determine how far you can go in life."

Soccer, however, was Hallie's first love. As a junior, she was team captain and scored 18 goals in 15 games to earn first team all-conference honors. Unfortunately, Hallie's high school lacked enough players to sustain a girls' team throughout her senior year, so she played on the boys' team and scored six goals in the final 11 games.

"I don't know if anything prepares you better for all that life throws at you than sports. You're constantly being thrown into the battle, you're tired, and you've got to give a game-winning effort every second you're out there." Hallie says. "It's the same thing with school and politics and life. If you aren't ready to put in the effort, run a little harder, do a little more research, kick a little farther, and learn a little more, you'll never reach your full potential."

August 9, 2016