

communicate with USD alumni who were in prominent positions. Gradually I started hearing comments about using my communication skills as SGA president."

Alissa took time to consider her own drive to seek the presidency. She knew that, as important as it is to consider the advice of peers and mentors, she had to possess the drive and commitment that role would demand.

"I had to know that I was willing to dedicate the time and energy to stand up and speak for students and all members of the USD family," Alissa says. "I had a relationship with two USD alumni who provided mentoring for me as I prepared for my SGA campaign. It was very challenging and rewarding. I enjoyed it. Being able to represent students here at the university has been incredibly rewarding and a great learning experience for me."

Other rewarding opportunities Alissa has enjoyed are her membership in the Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority and participating in that group's community service work. She's had opportunity to lobby in Washington and network with people across the nation.

"Volunteering at the Writing Center here on campus has been really good for me, too," Alissa says. "I've been able to help students who struggle with communication skills, further developing my own teaching skills."

As she prepares to receive her bachelor's degree in political science during USD's Spring 2013 graduation ceremonies, Alissa reflects on the many opportunities that have already come her way.

"I always knew I wanted a political science degree and that USD was

the college for me," Alissa says. "Many friends were uncertain about their future plans, so I have always felt fortunate to have such a clear idea of my life goals."

Alissa's parents, Jeff and Pam, lived outside the city, which sometimes seemed very inconvenient to Alissa and her siblings. However, since her father's work involved the Lewis & Clark recreation area, Alissa and her family often enjoyed outdoor activities during leisure time.

"Now I see those experiences as a blessing," Alissa says. "Some of my favorite memories are of fun times we shared outdoors. And I have great memories of times in both middle school and high school. I participated in the YHS theater program and took Advanced Placement classes with some friends. It seems we had a lot of homework and there were many nights we studied at the Fryn' Pan until late at night, drinking gallons of coffee. Those were good times."

Because her mother worked in the health care field, Alissa often heard conversations about health laws as she was growing up. She believes she may pursue positions involving health care law and advocacy for patients.

"I would like to go to law school at some point in the future," Alissa says. "Not right away. I need to take some time to travel and see other parts of the country. But I plan to return to USD and enter law school here."

As she begins to prepare for transition into the workplace, Alissa says she has a new appreciation for the education foundation she was able to put in place with the help of Yankton High School educators.

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