

## ■ DREAMS

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"It was there I learned the professional skills I now use daily," Alissa says. "I think of Cheryl and Terry Winter who coached me in middle school and high school. Bob Beard, Mary Pat Bierle and Ted Powell are others who come to mind. It's often easy to minimize the significance of a good teacher, but ultimately we owe the most credit for our accomplishments to those teachers. I encourage students to never take their education for granted."

VanMeeteren is one of few women implementing the role of USD's SGA president. While she doesn't see women as having superior ability to serve in governmental positions, she also doesn't allow her gender to limit development of life goals.

"I really like the idea of leaving a legacy of attaining something that was never done by a woman in the past," Alissa says. "It's important to me to remember that I can serve as a role model to others and inspire them to pursue their dreams."

Throughout her college career, Alissa has kept the idea of balance in the forefront. It's a principle that was driven home at an early age by her father.

"If I had a nickel for every time Dad said 'balance,' I could probably pay for a semester of college," Alissa says. "In college it's really important to balance academics, extracurricular obligations and your social life. If you're not able to do that, you're going to have a difficult time."

The idea of balance came back to Alissa again as she prepared to campaign for election as SGA president.

"Nick Moser advised me before I decided to campaign that I needed to make sure I was okay with the risk of losing the election," Alissa says. "It takes a special person to put themselves in the shooting range. People do come at you. If you can cope with losing a risk, you really have nothing to lose."

In the years ahead, Alissa hopes to emulate the excellent parenting skills she experienced in her home. She has enjoyed the opportunity to "prove" herself and has learned a great deal from all the challenges that opportunity brings.

"One of the great things about college is you get to make your own decisions," Alissa says. "That's also one of the biggest challenges. You have to make your own decisions. When you're deciding which direction to take, you can't rush it. It might take a year of college before you

know for sure what you want to do with your life. It's okay to make changes. I know now that I will never allow anyone to tell me what to do in terms of education or career choices. Some of my biggest setbacks in college came when I listened to others who thought they knew what was best for me. I've learned that failures aren't fun, but they are the best learning experiences I've had.

"I have also learned not to underestimate my abilities," Alissa adds. "Don't let anyone ever tell you a goal isn't worth striving for or that you're not capable of achieving it. Let your dreams come from your heart and drive your ambition."

■ by Loretta Sorensen



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## Cooking with Chef Staci

### Broiled Salmon with Vegetable Quinoa Pilaf

- \* 4 Salmon Fillets- skinless
  - \* 1 T Olive Oil
  - \* 1 Lemon
  - \* 2 t Ground Cumin
  - \* Salt and Pepper to taste
- \*Place Fillets on Foil covered Baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil, squeeze lemon over and season with Cumin, salt and pepper.

\*Preheat Broiler and place salmon under and broil 7-12 minutes, until fish flakes easily with fork.  
Serve on quinoa pilaf.

### Quinoa Pilaf

- \* 2 c Quinoa- rinsed and drained
  - \* 4 c water or low sodium chicken broth
  - \* 2 T Olive Oil
  - \* 1 package Mushrooms – sliced
  - \* 1 large Zucchini- diced
  - \* 1 Red Pepper- diced
- \*Cook quinoa according to directions. While that is cooking, in a large sauté pan, over medium high heat, sauté the mushrooms, zucchini and red pepper in the olive oil until just soft, season with salt and pepper, and toss together with the cooked quinoa.

### Coconut Shrimp with Sweet Chili Mayo

- \* 1/2 c Mayonnaise
  - \* 1 T Honey
  - \* 1 T Sriracha Sauce
- \*Stir together and taste. Adjust with more sriracha or honey to your taste. Refrigerate until ready to serve.
- \* 1 # Shrimp- peeled and deveined with the tail attached
  - \* 1/2 c Flour
  - \* 2 T Coconut Milk (or regular milk)
  - \* 1/1 c shredded Coconut
  - \* 1 egg
  - \* 1/2 c Panko Bread Crumbs
- \*Place the flour in 1 large zip lock bag, beat the egg and milk in a medium bowl, and place the panko and coconut in another large zip lock bag.
- \*Toss the shrimp with the flour, then knock off any extra flour, and dip in egg mixture, then toss with the panko and coconut mixture.
- \*Pan fry in 2 inches of hot oil, or deep fry at 350° until shrimp is cooked through, and panko and coconut are golden brown and drain well. Or bake at 425° until shrimp is cooked and panko is golden.
- \*Serve with the sweet chili mayo
- \*\*You could also do this with chicken tenders, or nuggets, but the timing would be different.

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