

# Communication is key to SGA President Alissa VanMeeteren

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Alissa VanMeeteren, who was elected as president of the Student Government Association at the University of South Dakota last March, hopes to serve both the USD and Vermillion communities as a new school year kicks off on campus.

"Basically, the Student Government Association is a collective representation of all of the colleges on campus. There are senators elected from each of the colleges rather than at large, and that way everybody is represented," she said. "Our job is to support the students and to support the various organizations through funding and other promotional stuff that we can do."

Alissa is from Yankton, and is a political science/economics major at USD.

She plans, as SGA

president, to make sure students and organizations on campus are properly represented.

"In addition I've made it a personal priority to not only be a representative on campus, but to also be a representative in the community," Alissa said. "I love the relationship that the school has with the Vermillion community, and I think it's something that needs to be strengthened, if possible."

"I think about how much the students depend on the Vermillion community. Sometimes, they don't recognize that, so if there are things that we can do to promote businesses, if there are things that we can do to support different organizations in the community – that would be one of my big goals this year, she said. "That's why I'm trying to reach out to as many people as possible."

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Communication is a key component of all of the goals she has in mind during her term as SGA president.

"I want to improve communication between students and administrators. I want to give students more of an opportunity to make their voices heard at a liberal arts college," Alissa said. "There are a lot of students' opinions on a lot of different things, and I believe there are times – and it's nobody's fault – I just think sometimes students don't have as much

opportunity to make their opinions known and to really feel that they can make a difference."

Alissa is contemplating the scheduling of "town hall" types of meetings where students can feel free to express their ideas.

"Something like that would give students the opportunity to speak up, and perhaps there could be different debates on campus," she said.

With the general election looming in November, Alissa believes it is important that the Student Government Association play an active



role.

"It is so important that we help the students and the community with 'get out the vote' efforts and other projects that revolve around the election," she said. "That goes back to your political empathy, and

your involvement with that, and I think that's something that everybody both on campus and within the community needs to appreciate and participate in."

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## S.D. Guard receives upgraded helicopter



The South Dakota Army National Guard received its first L-model UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City, which will provide an enhanced capability for air crews combating wild-land fires and other support missions.

The L-model Black Hawk increases the operational load capacity of the aircraft through improved engines, transmission and flight controls.

"The benefit of this upgrade will be noticed in our water-bucket operations during wild-land fires," said Maj. Jon Murphy, state aviation officer for the SDARNG.

"The structural improvements and cargo hook increase our structural limit from 8,000 to 9,000 lbs."

Murphy said the biggest increase will be seen during the hot, summer days fighting fires in the Black Hills. Having an additional 1,000 horse power will improve power and safety.

"This not only allows crews to carry more water to help with fire suppression, but most importantly, allows for an improved safety margin when operating these aircraft at their maximum power limitations," he said.

The UH-60L will be assigned to the Rapid City-based Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment, which recently returned from deployment in Iraq and Kuwait in May. The unit now has five A models, in addition to the L model.

Murphy said they are hopefully of being able to acquire two more L-models by next year.

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