

# Why do future students choose USD?

By Sarah Wetzel,  
For the Plain Talk

Those who live in Vermillion know of its appeal and have their own reasons for staying. However, a large portion of the population is in a state of constant turnover due to the University of South Dakota being located here.

So what appeal does the university hold that draws over 10,000 students to Vermillion?

According to Mark Petty, USD Dean of Enrollment, one of the top reasons students choose USD is the quality of the academic program.

"I came to USD because the science department had come recommended by a former professor," said Marije Wright, who graduated this month.

Another top reason according to Petty is the affordability and cost.

According to Wright, this was another reason for

her choosing to attend the university.

"I liked that the out of state tuition was less than what the in-state tuition would have been at the other university I was accepted to," she said.

Petty also mentioned many students can't put a finger on why they come here, it just feels right.

This turned out to be the case for Heather Mathisen, a junior majoring in Psychology.

"My older brother was a USD student so I had come up and come to a couple of USD events with him," she said. "In the back of my mind it was one that I just wanted to check out. I picked USD mostly because it just felt like I'd be comfortable here and that it would be a decent home for eight months of the year."

Andy Aberle, a junior majoring in history, shares Mathisen's sentiments.

"I guess my biggest reason for coming here was

my two older brothers came here," he said.

"Rather than looking into other schools, they both said it was good so I was like sure, why not?"

Many students also appreciate the university for its location.

"Vermillion serves as a safe, welcoming host for the university; and recreational and cultural opportunities abound in town, the nearby countryside, and in neighboring communities," USD's website reads.

While some might look down on the relatively small size of the town, to some this counts as a plus.

"I went and visited other places and I felt like I'd just get lost most of the time," Mathisen said. Mathisen herself is from a small town 30 minutes south of Sioux City.

"I liked what I observed in the Vermillion community," Wright said. "I liked the idea of living in



There are plenty of reasons for students to choose attending the University of South Dakota located in Vermillion.

THOMAS HATZENBUHLER / FOR THE PLAIN TALK

a smaller community versus a bigger city. I also thought there would be more job opportunities available here."

"I'm from the cities where it's crowded so I thought this was good," said Sofia Creamer, Junior.

"Plus South Dakota has a lot of sites for archaeology. Because I want to go for a history major, it's nice."

USD is South Dakota's oldest university, founded in 1862.

According to the university website, the fall

enrollment for 2013 was 10,235. That's just under the U.S. Census Bureau's population estimate for the Vermillion population which is 10,692.

**For more information on the university, visit [usd.edu](http://usd.edu).**

## Organic products: What does that label mean?

By Anne La Brake  
For the Plain Talk

These days we have begun to hear more and more about organic options and how beneficial these choices can be.

The question on all of our minds is very simple.

Are organic choices worth it? If so, why?

Angela Jackson of the Vermillion PrairieSun Organics Farm can certainly tell us a thing or two about organics.

"I have been a lead organic auditor for the International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS) for the past seven years, visiting a hundred organic operations around the world," informs Jackson. "I pretty much eat, breath, and sleep organic agriculture 365 days a year. This is more than a lifestyle for me. It is a job as well as a lifelong commitment to making a difference in the world one farm at a time."

"I am also considered a national expert on organic grass-fed beef systems and organic meat nutrition," she finalizes. "I am the former executive director for the Organic Grassfed Beef Coalition as well as an organic livestock inspector. I used to write articles for the Stockman Grassfarmer and other national publications."

Obviously Jackson is a great source to shed some light on what the benefits of going organic could be.

"This is a great question and one that I get asked a lot," she confirms. "The main reason to buy organic is because the consumer wishes to avoid,

reduce, or eliminate harmful and synthetic pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, antibiotics, hormones, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and synthetic additives in their diet."

Quite a hefty list of things you are not supposed to be getting when you buy organic, but, on that note, what are you getting?

"I want to emphasize that organic does not mean fewer calories or less saturated fat," Jackson assures. "This is only the case when you are talking about pasture raised meats where it has been scientifically shown to have less saturated fat, lower calories, and higher good fats and conjugated linoleic acid."

Conjugated linoleic acid is a fat found abundantly in grass fed meat and dairy, and to a lesser extent grain fed ones.

Often considered a healthy naturally occurring fat, its chemical structure is different from industrial trans fats.

"What organic industry, science, and research has shown is that by eating certified organic

foods, a consumer can lower their overall level of exposure to the synthetic chemical pesticides, fungicides, antibiotics, as well as GMOs," she explains. "These are commonly found on or in conventional raw foods."

Is toxin exposure a big enough concern, though, for the average person?

"Some, if not most, conventional fruit is actually treated for phytosanitary reasons and to prevent pest damage," Jackson states. "The FDA states that these chemicals are safe within the allowed residue limits for a normal person, but one might reason that a person with a low immune system or chronic illness may be more susceptible and sensitive to these chemicals that are very foreign to our bodies."

"In all cases, more, as well as better, research needs to be done to support organic food nutrition claims," she agrees. "Also consumers should study up on the fact that if they eat a lot of conventional meat and dairy products, the majority of chemicals are stored in the lipid portion of the product that when consumed is broken down by our livers."

"After this, they then enter our blood stream where they go to every tissue of our body."

For those who have to watch

prices, though, how could one begin avoiding these chemicals?

"Many consumers are on a budget," Jackson agrees. "So with that, the easiest first step is to switch to certified organic vegetables, ground meat, and dairy products."

There may be a lot of profiteering, however, when it comes to organic claims, so Jackson gets quite revved up when it comes to explaining the confusion.

"Without understanding of what actually constitutes organic, marketplace confusion and fraud can be the outcome," she suggests. "The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 7 Part 205.100 require that each production or handling operation or specified portion of a production or handling operation that produces or handles crops, livestock, livestock products, or other agricultural products that are intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as '100 percent organic,' 'organic,' or 'made with organic' be certified according to the provisions of subpart E and all other applicable requirements with some allowed exceptions."

So what's an example of how this all plays out?

"A certified organic farm, such as PrairieSun Organics, is

subject to a rigorous annual inspection by an accredited certification body through the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Organic Program for a cost of around \$1,000 yearly," she clarifies. "After passing the inspection, an official certificate is issued to the farm, which designates the products that are eligible for sale as organic."

What then are the consumer's rights in all this?

"A consumer has every right to ask to see the organic certificate of the farmer to verify that the product is, in fact, certified organic," Jackson expounds. "For local non-certified farmers in Clay County, they can make organic claims as long as they meet CFR 205.101 (a) exception."

"This means that as long as the gross income from their organic sales does not exceed \$5,000 annually and they follow the agricultural rules in subpart C and labeling requirements in 205.310, they are an exception." "Anyone knowingly violating this rule is subject to a civil penalty up to \$11,000 for each occurrence," she reminds. "And any consumer can report a suspected violation directly to the USDA's National Organic Program at [NOPCompliance@ams.usda.gov](mailto:NOPCompliance@ams.usda.gov)."

## FACE

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sounded too risky for, at best, dubious reward. The other options were gene therapy and enzyme replacement therapies that were still in the experimental stage.

So they waited. And then they volunteered to go first.

"I was part of the clinical enzyme research trial," Gottsleben said. "So sophomore year I was gone for a couple of months, where I was living in Oakland, California, doing that trial."

Gottsleben dove deep into the medical experiment, hoping the enzyme therapy would alleviate some of the symptoms associated with her disorder.

"They were 'Naglazyme'-regular infusions," Gottsleben said. "So even though it wasn't FDA approved, I was still receiving that therapy. It was finally approved in 2005"

Gottsleben still regularly receives infusions because of the body's ability to flush out enzymes frequently.

She can tell now that there are physical differences if she misses or delays a therapy session.

"I noticed immediate results when I was in California and now I'm pretty stabilized." Gottsleben said. "Soon after going on the medicine my hair and skin became softer, my organs went back to normal sized, and I had more energy"

Although MPS will be part of who she is forever,

her quality of life was improved by having the therapy available.

"It affects my connective tissue, heart and other vital organs," Gottsleben said. "Because of that is why I'm shorter. Eyesight is kind of an issue, too"

Although living in South Dakota meant having to travel for therapy early on in treatment, Gottsleben feels as though the Vermillion community was influential, if not critical, to her adult success.

Currently residing in Sioux Falls, Gottsleben is proud to call Vermillion home and feels that the community was a key component to her development.

"I feel that growing up in Vermillion was probably the best thing for me because it was a tight knit community, and that was something I enjoyed," Gottsleben said. "It was a small town type of mentality, but at the same time, I believe with the college we had so much going on."

Gottsleben has a tight knit group of friends from childhood she still keeps in touch with.

As she moved on from elementary school to the communal middle school and high school, where she had to get a special chair to help her get from class to class, she made friends with many classmates who never saw her as different.

"I never felt like I was odd or that I was different," Gottsleben said. "I felt like I was accepted which helped me develop my confidence today. I never felt like I didn't belong."

Physical restrictions did

not hinder Gottsleben while finishing up her education within the Vermillion Public School system, some of which can be attributed to her strong will, and some of which can be credited to the environment the school provided.

"I really do believe I wouldn't be where I am today without having been a VHS graduate," Gottsleben said. "Or had the education we had, or being a part of that exposure to education because of the University."

Inspired by that distinctive education, MPS, and life experiences, Gottsleben found a way to meld her concern for the cause of disability awareness and teaching other's about life experiences.

Aside from volunteering for experimental therapies, giving talks across the country about MPS, serving on public interest committees, and working for the Sanford Center for Disabilities, Gottsleben has decided to write books.

"The first book I wrote was self-published in 2012," Gottsleben said. "That book is more of a culmination of an autobiography and things I've gone through."

While Gottsleben doesn't claim to be a

motivational expert, the autobiography titled "When Life Hands You Lemons" falls into that category.

"The second half of my book I talk about how to overcome things that you have to do to deal with life and have the outlook that I have," Gottsleben said. "I write what I know."

First inspired to write by Mrs. Haggerty in fifth and sixth grades, Gottsleben's writing has now spilled over into the children's literature genre as well.

"The book that I'm working on now is kind of like the same take on that but it's a book for children who are school age," Gottsleben said. "I am the character, I am talking about acceptance and how we're all made different."

Gottsleben hopes the book will help children understand disabilities, from both an inside and outside perspective.

"I feel like if we can help children learn right away that it's okay to be different, the better off they will be in life," Gottsleben said. "The world is full of hardships no matter who you are, no matter if you have a disability or not."

Author is only one title Gottsleben holds, however. In addition to her writing endeavors, Gottsleben is

the Marketing Communications Specialist for the Center for Disabilities within the Sanford School of Medicine. Gottsleben was drawn to this position and The Center because of her unique experience growing up.

"For me, there are a couple favorite things. I've always grown up in the world of education and then I've also grown up in the medical world. I feel like working for the CD [Center for Disabilities] and the Med School brings both of those worlds together," Gottsleben said. "I really enjoy being able to help others, even though I may not get the individual connection but I know I'm helping the cause and what our mission and our goals are."

Gottsleben fills her days at The Center by taking care of social media like tweets, Facebook, website functions and announcements for training sessions; it really is about the connectivity.

"I feel great knowing I'm a person with a disability helping others with a disability," Gottsleben said.

"Our goal at the CD is to try to help educators, professionals, and families learn more about disabilities and best

practices for disabilities." Lastly, Gottsleben didn't just want to stop at being employed by The Center for Disabilities and writing books.

"Since being up here in Sioux Falls, I've really become more active in the community," Gottsleben said. "I'm on the disability awareness commission for the city of Sioux Falls."

Serving on the commission gives Gottsleben the opportunity to plan events, such as Miss Wheelchair South Dakota, and is involved with multiple facets of the organization.

"I am subcommittee-chair of the event called 'Art Abilities,'" Gottsleben said. "That is a two month art show where, down at the museum of visual materials, there will be an art show with the artists who are disabled."

Gottsleben continues to be optimistic about both her health, and her endeavors.

"I hope to write more children's books, and create other types of materials about acceptance."

"I also hope to keep making a difference in any way that I can," Gottsleben said. "My future seems endless of possibilities."

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