

Q & A With Lena Aloysius '08

By Jessica Cornwell '10

EDITOR'S NOTE | *We have been running a Q&A section in this magazine for several years, but as far as we could determine, it has never featured a current student. We thought it would be a nice touch to have a current student do the interview as well.*

Lena Aloysius, a native of Holy Cross, Alaska and Pacific Undergraduate Community Council (PUCC) President, graduates this May with a major in politics and government. Aloysius plans to teach politics to middle school students in the Teach for America program in Denver, Colo. Aloysius said she is looking forward to the adventure and gladly anticipates having four very distinct seasons instead of Oregon weather.

How did you find out about Pacific and why did you choose it?

I first learned of Pacific from one of my friends who was a year ahead of me back in high school. She decided to attend and sent me one of those free applications that Pacific gives out. My junior year English teacher (Michael Kimber '91) is an alumnus of Pacific. He was very persistent for me to attend. I thought with so much pride in the school so many years after graduating, it must be a fabulous school.

How did you get involved in student government?

I first learned of PUCC during Orientation my freshman year. I was listening to [the former PUCC President] Vinnie Dyuk then as he told me his story of his ambition to be the president of the school. He mentioned all the great activities they organize and sponsor. From that point on, I knew I wanted to be a part of something bigger and PUCC was what I was leaning towards. I had been involved with student government throughout my education before college and I have always had an interest in it.

What does your job involve? Do you have a favorite part?

I have many jobs that I do as President, some of which include holding the chair position in a sub-committee (campus life), organizing the weekly meetings and running them. I serve as the undergraduate representative on the University Council Committee and have monthly meetings with Phil Creighton. I enjoy it all. Every day is a learning experience. The best part is the interaction with many of the students. I like that face-to-face communication.

Why and when did you choose to major in politics and government?

Growing up, I watched the news daily and read the newspaper with my father. He has a saying that I still love to this day, that will never get old: "Turn the news on, the world could be ending and we wouldn't even know it." I always thought it was silly and so dramatic, but I appreciated that he wanted to stay caught up with current events. My interest grew even more when I reached high school. I had the greatest social studies teachers, Dionne Jackson and Brenda Campen, who made their classes very entertaining in a way in which you were able to process what they were teaching. They are both wonderful.

What do you plan to do after you graduate in May?

I have so many goals that I want to accomplish and will take each plan that I have day by day. I am taking a year off to do some personal studying of my own. I think it is important to have outside experience before entering graduate school, which I plan to do. Education is important to me. I know that there are so many low-income schools and students out there who have less of an advantage. I want to do some work and research in how the economy affects a child and the family's learning ability.

What are "Phil Forums?"

Phil Forums are casual meetings with the President. He expressed that he wanted to really hear the students' concerns and questions that deal with the University, so the forums were formed where students can have face time with him to ask anything they want. They are held once a month and have a very successful turnout; however, more are always welcome!

What if you don't get into graduate school?

I am not applying right away, so I do not like to think about the "what ifs." I am very optimistic.

Can you tell me more about Teach for America?

Like I said before, I love and value education. The official website says Teach for America is “the national corps of outstanding recent college graduates and professionals of all academic majors and career interests who commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools and become leaders in the effort to expand educational opportunity.” It is a wonderful program that I hope to be a part of. I am in the application process right now.

Now that you're graduating, you can't run for Student Body President again. Any thoughts?

Pacific is wonderful! I am very happy that I have had the opportunity to attend such a fine University. I think that I have had a very successful term in office up to this point. There are still so many things that I want to do in which I am working on right now and perhaps everything that has been built up will continue to do so after I am gone. PUC is a great organization that I think every student should get involved with in one way or another. It is a great learning opportunity. I know the next group of students who will be elected to PUC will do a wonderful job and bring great things to the University. I am grateful that I had this opportunity and experience. It was a lot of fun and still is!

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