

ASSOCIATED STUDENT
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

606 MARYLAND AVENUE

DRUM HOUSE



MARLA HOLLANDSWORTH: A Leader

Governor Joe Teasdale, seated, and Senator Joe Frappier exchange handshakes after signing the bill that gave 18-year-olds the right to consent for medical treatment. Hollandsworth is proud of ASUM's part in its passage.



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Now executive director of ASUM, Maria Hollandsworth met President Jimmy Carter last summer while she was chairperson of the National Student Lobby. She also was one of three students who visited Russia as diplomatic representatives of U.S. students.



for the Student Voice

By David LaGesse and Austin Ruse



The spring and summer itinerary included a White House visit with Jimmy Carter, a diplomatic tour through the U.S.S.R., and an appointment as the full-time executive director of the Associated Students of the University of Missouri (ASUM).

Nationally, student activism has taken a new form. Maria Hollandsworth is one of its new leaders.

"As a freshman on Campus, I felt I was entering a world of intense potential — all of these bright minds with all this youthful energy," Hollandsworth remembers. "The

campus atmosphere itself was enough to motivate me.”

And Hollandsworth has been motivated. She's excelled in a wide spectrum of Campus activities, including Homecoming and athletics. But her best work has been off-campus and came after she focused her attention on a new goal: involving students as full citizens in the daily democratic decisions of our government.

Hollandsworth arrived in Columbia from her home in Rolla, Missouri, in the fall of '74. She entered the week-long sorority rush as a way to meet some people, and ended it by pledging the Chi Omega sorority. Studying, house activities, a job, and fulfilling the requirements of her debate team scholarship kept her busy.

After the debate team folded in her sophomore year, Hollandsworth channeled her energy into the growing women's interscholastic athletics program. "Sports always have been a challenge and a good time, but political involvement began to dominate my time," she says.

Hollandsworth's new job, as the chief executive for ASUM in '78-'79, is a result of several years of political work for the student lobby. She began in fall '76 as an ASUM legislative intern, earning course credit for research and committee testimony in the Missouri legislature. As an intern, she watched Governor Joseph Teasdale's signing of the 1977 Senate Bill #48, which gave 18-year-olds the right to consent for medical treatment. It was one of the bills she had been assigned to advocate.

Hollandsworth is proud of ASUM's part in passing that bill. "It was a prime example of what we're trying to do. We're not students striking out against society, but we are working to correct what we see as its flaws. Our main goal is, through persistent effort, to present a reasonable, well-prepared and responsible image of students working in the political process."

PERSISTENCE IS A KEY with Hollandsworth, as President Carter experienced in his meeting with her last April. "We shook hands," she recalls, "but as he withdrew I held on. I wanted to make sure he understood my point — I think he did."

Hollandsworth was meeting Carter in her capacity as chairperson of the National Student Lobby (NSL). Soon after her work as an ASUM intern, she had become centrally involved in the Washington D.C. based student organization and its efforts to merge with its rival, the National Student Association (NSA). The two groups did merge in August of this year to form the United States Student Association (USSA), and Hollandsworth's signature is on all the merger papers.

"I had been committed to the merger during my entire tenure on the board, first as vice chair and then as chair of the board," she says. "I'm glad the process was completed during my term."

Although she says there were "brief glimpses" of glamour while on the board of a national organization, Hollandsworth said the first requirement for a board mem-

ber is the ability to collate and stuff. "The paid staff is very small, and the conferences are very large projects. But it is fascinating to work with people from all over the country. It sharpened my skills at coalition building."

Besides the White House visit, another "brief glimpse" of glamour came early last summer. Hollandsworth and two other national student leaders traveled 35,000 miles through the U.S.S.R. and neighboring East European countries as diplomatic representatives of America's students. The mission was jointly funded by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. governments.

"WE HAD ONLY A WEEK'S NOTICE before the three-week trip, but it's one of those chances you just don't pass up," Hollandsworth says. "It was amazing to me how many of our concerns are shared by Soviet students. We all are fighting for a well-rounded education, an enjoyable job when we graduate — although the Soviets do have a 100 percent placement rate for college graduates — and even on tougher issues such as nuclear disarmament."

Hollandsworth was most pleased in that the Soviets had directly contacted the U.S. student leaders. She called it evidence of the growing prominence of a united national student voice.

Despite the other demands on her time, Hollandsworth continued attending her Mizzou classes. She also continued her Campus activities; vice president of her house, '77 Homecoming Queen attendant and Missouri Students Association vice presidential candidate, as well as an interim stint last spring as chairperson of ASUM's board of directors.

This year, she is concentrating on her first full-time position, as ASUM's executive director. "It is nice to narrow my focus for a while," she says. "I enjoy doing a lot of different things at once, but it's easier now to keep things straight and organized in my mind."

She's also more comfortable with the reality of the Campus and its population. "We're not dealing with abstract concepts and theories as we did most of the time at national board meetings," she explains, "but what we're talking about in ASUM is 23,000 students and 23,000 votes. We try to unravel the issues so they can be better understood by students," she continues. "We're doing what we can to encourage students to be registered and voting."

Each of ASUM's three staff members have at least a year's experience with the organization. "That much experience is very unusual in a student organization," Hollandsworth notes. "Combined with a longer session, ASUM could have its best year yet in the state legislature."

Next summer, as she considers her future, Hollandsworth will be well prepared with her degree in political science, a wealth of experience, — and considerable accomplishment already behind her.

Like many of us, she's engrossed in traditional campus activities. But she has gone further, helping lead a growing student voice in state and national politics. □