



Commitment to Service Helps Global Go-Getter Stand Out

by Maria Eugenia Miranda

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Growing up in Flushing Queens, New York, Alyssa Alicino was raised with many friends from Latin America and a sense of responsibility toward her community.

“I’ve always had a special connection with the culture. Many of my friends were of Latin American descent, and I spent countless hours with their families trying to decipher their conversations in Spanish,” said the junior at Baruch College at the City University of New York. “Since I was a young girl, I always found helping others extremely fulfilling.”

So it’s come as no surprise to Alicino’s family and peers that she’s explored her interests in South and Central America and sought highly prestigious internships in public service like one at the White House as a college student.

“She has a lively, inquisitive mind, a great spirit and attitude toward learning, and a genuine interest in public service,” said Dr. Sanders Korenman, Alicino’s economics professor who taught her economic analysis of public policy in his class, which has undoubtedly been useful in her full-time workload this spring with the National Economic Council. Conducting research, managing incoming queries, and writing memos are just a few of the tasks Alicino is undertaking amid a very select group of young people at the White House.

“My favorite aspects of the internship thus far have been the Speaker Series with senior staff members and small group meetings. I think that hearing others’ experiences helps expose me to other opportunities I wouldn’t have thought about before,” she said, adding that she’s also really enjoyed the community service project. “It allows me to put some of the topics we deal with at the White House into context.”

As part of her experience, Alicino is helping with an SAT prep program at a Washington area high school.

Indeed, this rising public servant has taken part in many more activities as a college student that have put major geo-political issues into perspective, as she’s studied abroad in Spain and Guatemala, taught English classes in Chile, and attended a leadership development conference in Mexico in just a few years.

“I was constantly surrounded by Latin American immigrants; however, I didn’t understand their background completely since I had never traveled abroad. I felt that, if I planned on having a fruitful career in New York City, understanding the culture and speaking the language of those that surrounded me was key,” said Alicino, who served as the vice president in 2012 of Outgoing Exchange, an organization that helps send students overseas. Now she’s serving on the group’s National Support Team as the Supply and Demand manager. Along with staying involved with her community and serving as a leader at school, Alicino has worked at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater company for three years.

While Alicino counts former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn as role models, her mother’s persistence and diligence in finishing a bachelor’s degree as a working mother has served as an inspiration in her studies and professional pursuits.

“Growing up in New York City housing projects during the 1960s and 1970s, she did not have the multitude of opportunities that I am so lucky to have within my reach today. Despite the fact that she had no parental or professional guidance, she always strove to better herself as a person and gain knowledge within her reach, even becoming a college graduate in her forties,” said Alicino, who is a first-generation graduate on her father’s side.

So what’s next for the fledgling public servant?

First, a summer internship with the State Department in Argentina and then graduating a semester early shortly thereafter—in December 2013. Although she’s not exactly sure whether she’ll go into the public or private sectors upon graduation, Alicino will be equipped with a truly global educational experience.

“I feel that, after my travels and studies, I will have a better understanding of the conditions that my New York City neighbors originated from, and think this is vital to truly excelling in my future career,” she said.