

## BRIGHTLIGHTS



[Larson Thune]

## SGA president makes his mark with cool confidence

By SARAH MEAD ('09)

Larson Thune ('09) has the kind of cool confidence that characterizes success. It's probably why the student body elected him Student Government Association president. His fellow Dukes believe in him. What's cool: He believes in them right back.

During his tenure as SGA president, Thune developed a program for freshmen that encourages them to get involved in JMU organizations. This program "stresses involvement as the key to having the best possible Madison Experience," says Thune, who collaborated in promoting off-campus safety with other student leaders, local landlords, JMU administrators and Harrisonburg police.

Tackling the many tasks of student body president would be enough of a challenge for most overachievers, but Thune has shared his leadership with numerous student organizations. One of his favorite mottos is "comfort is the enemy of success." He encourages the philosophy of always striving for change — "creating bigger and better things out of what we are given."

Thune served as a leadership counselor for Make Your Mark on Madison, a semester-long leadership program where students gain insight into their personal values, leadership styles, facilitation techniques and decision-making. The program is a springboard into authentic involvement in the Madison Experience. Thune is the founding chapter president of his fraternity, Alpha Tau Omega, and

he served as an analyst for the Madison Investment Fund and as a campaign captain for the Madison Student Giving Campaign.

"I found myself wearing many different hats as student body president," says Thune, who became involved with the SGA during his junior year when he joined as a representative in spring 2008. "Some days I spent a lot of time meeting with various administrators about any number of issues, from dining services questions to off-campus safety to parking concerns. Other days my focus was more internal, and I worked with other student representatives to determine the direction of the SGA and how we could position ourselves to best serve students."

A finance major, Thune has long-term career goals that point toward financial consulting. "I've always loved problem-solving and helping people, so my major seems a perfect fit," he says.

Thune says his Madison Experience has fully prepared him for the "real world" and his launch into the competitive job market. Even graduating in a time of economic instability, Thune is confident. "With its emphasis on service, JMU has taught me what it means to be a vested member in a community. Even if I don't [have a career in finance], I will still possess the tools and knowledge to be an enlightened and invested member of society."

During his Spring 2009 Commencement speech, Thune reflected on his Madison Experience and what makes JMU special. "Our purple and gold campus is a unique place," he told fellow graduates. "It is a place largely free from the social, political and economic upheaval that afflicts other areas. We have a greater sense of community than any place I've ever been. And that sense of community is rooted in the people of JMU — people who believe in friendliness, in service and in each other." ■

**SGA President Larson Thune ('09) developed a program that encourages freshmen to get involved and have the best Madison Experience.**