



Seth Bowden, one suspects, can see the question coming from a mile away. "So, are you interested in a career in politics?" It is, after all, the kind of thing you get asked a lot when you're president of something like the UVM Student Government Association. Professors, fellow students, grandparents, the occasional alumni magazine writer—they all want to know.

No surprise then that Bowden's answer is well thought out, maybe even a bit politic. While he's greatly interested in the working of politics and government, he's not necessarily interested in being a politician. "People look at the figurehead, public functions of politicians, and confuse that with the work of being able to goal set, problem solve, brainstorm, and advocate," he says. "That's what interests me the most."

For political heroes, Bowden doesn't look to career politicians, but to leaders such as Nelson Mandela, "who have used the political system to fight for just causes." Perhaps even more so, he admires those whose names we might never know. "There are countless, unnamed people who do the nitty-gritty work of diplomacy but don't get the seven-second soundbite on CNN. People who are behind the scenes are the driving force in American politics."

The political science major's interests lean toward international relations, perhaps rooted in the fact that his childhood and adolescent years were spent in both New Hampshire and New Zealand. (No detectable Kiwi accent, but he's given to an occasional phrase—"when I started university"—that has a whiff of elsewhere about it.) Burlington has been home since 2002, when Seth's parents moved back to the states after his father, Breck, was appointed as the Patrick Chair in Watershed Planning and Science in UVM's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources.

During SGA meetings this year in Billings's Marsh Lounge or wherever post-graduation life takes him after May, Bowden feels his academic focus has prepared him well. "Political science is an interesting way to engage the world," the senior says. "I feel like having a political science and economics background provides a broad framework to understand the real reasons events take place."

—Thomas Weaver

Billings and beyond