Student Advisory Council President Leads in Life and Academia
by Lucy Constantino

For many undergraduate students, the first year is filled with all kinds of surprises, from meeting a new roommate to navigating the campus. But for Peter Leach, second-year psychology major, each surprise proved to be a hidden opportunity.

Having invested time, energy and resources into pouring over 13 college websites, touring campuses and speaking with students, the Coppell, Texas native applied on a whim to the University of Denver.

“Despite thinking my list of colleges was complete at thirteen, I ultimately ‘threw in’ a university which I knew almost nothing about,” said Leach, who was pleasantly surprised to find the location, size and sports programs at DU were exactly what he was looking for. “All in all, the University of Denver fit nearly all the criteria that a prospective college student could wish for.”

Once on campus, Leach began looking for ways to get involved.

“Being a leader has always been a passion of mine, whether it’s leading a group project, organizing a ski trip with friends or leading a student organization,” he said. So, Leach took the next step by running for AHSS Student Advisory Council president as a first-year student. He couldn’t have been more surprised when he won.

“There were many exceptional people running for the position of president, so, frankly, I’m unsure what set me apart from the competition.” He speculates that it could have been his passion for traveling. “When brought up in conversation with other DU students, it’s almost always something we share in common.”

Having always been fascinated by Africa as a child, Leach visited South Sudan in the summers of 2013 and 2015. Traveling to Africa held many surprises for him, ranging from learning about a different way of life to discovering an interest in disaster and humanitarian relief.

“After returning home from my first trip in 2013, I realized that I was determined to do nonprofit work and humanitarian relief,” said Leach. “Faith, religion and beliefs aside, I have no doubt that I was placed on this earth to help others.”

These trips helped shape a bigger picture in Leach’s academic career, as he declared a major in psychology and a minor in international studies.

“I chose to major in psychology because not only is psychology utilized in everyday life, but a multitude of concepts within the topic of psychology interest me,” he said. “Plus, I’ve always enjoyed traveling, learning new languages, and learning about new cultures…reasons why I chose to minor in international studies.”
Leach will be the SAC President for the 2016-2017 school year, and already has innovative and exciting ideas including thesis support groups that meet quarterly, community collectives for student outreach and panels, networking events, and the possibility of gender-neutral bathrooms.

What still remains unknown is where his undergraduate career from DU will lead him.

“I’m unsure what exactly I wish to do after college, but I could see myself as a practicing psychologist or a marketing manager. Regardless of what career I have, I hope to do some type of nonprofit work or humanitarian aid for the rest of my life,” he said.