

## Profile: Emma Halling

By Callie Byrnes

Student Body Vice President Emma Halling slipped her boxing gloves on over her bright yellow hand wraps and pulled the straps tight between her teeth. Scuffing her Nikes against the gym floor and raising her fists in front of her, she stared at the bag for a few moments before finally throwing a punch.

As Halling's fist hit the bag, she glanced up with a satisfied smile. It was just another day of training, but that didn't seem to matter. Whether she is lobbying for women's rights at the state capitol, sparring with an opponent in the ring, or training alone, Halling has a laser-like focus on hitting her target.

"I cannot half-ass anything," Halling said. "If I'm doing something, I'm completely doing something. In any aspect of my life, I can't just stop at the fun level."

Halling, a junior from Hays, is well known on campus for her achievements at KU. Not only was she elected as the Student Senate Vice President for the Fall 2013 school year, but she's also a 2014 finalist for the prestigious [Truman Scholarship](#). She's involved in University Senate, the Domestic Partner Benefits Task Force and the Commission with the Status of Women. She also played a key role in founding the Title IX Roundtable, an organization that works to improve sexual assault prevention and education on campus.

Through these organizations, Halling has been able to amplify attention to the campus sexual assault policy and recently went to the state capitol in Topeka to [propose a bill to exempt the tax on textbook costs](#) for university students in the state. She works hard to improve university students' lives, even if she knows she may not be able to see the full impact of her actions before she graduates. She's one of the first to admit she has a lot on her plate, but she relies on her Google calendar and her type A personality to keep her on task.

“She’s very passionate, very intelligent, and very humbling because she’s so accessible,” said Mark Arce, a junior/senior class student senator from Overland Park. “She’s very nice if you just approach her and talk to her, but she can also get things done.”

Halling decided to add boxing to her list of extracurricular activities in August last year. While she started the sport as a hobby, she soon realized she wanted to compete as a fighter. After a few months of exercising at [Title Boxing Club](#), she began paying for private lessons and spending her mornings and evenings training.

Since then, she’s already sparred with her trainer, 2008 Olympic silver medalist [Yosh Wagoner](#), and is counting down the months before her first official fight at the [Golden Gloves](#) tournament in August. She said she knew her hard work was going to pay off, both in and out of the ring.

“I think that for young women especially, learning boxing is super valuable because you’re learning discipline, you’re learning how to be successful in what’s a male dominated field, and you’re also developing a sense of self-confidence,” Halling said. “If you can go and successfully hit something, if you can box, if you can win a fight, you’re going to feel good about yourself.”

Awista Kamwand, a senior from Lenexa who works the desk at Title Boxing Club, said Halling spends hours exercising on her own, even after the toughest training sessions.

“She doesn’t let anything get in her way, and that’s something you can see,” Kamwand said. “No matter how tired she is, she’s going to keep pushing until she gets what she wants to achieve.”

Halling will step down from her position as Vice President for the 2014 school year, but she still has a lot left she wants to accomplish. She has months of strict training for her first boxing tournament and she’s working hard to get admitted into law school. From there, she plans to get a master in public policy and work in reproductive justice. She knows it’s

going to be a struggle, but she's always anticipating the next fight.

"I want to work in abortion policy at the state level," Halling said. "It's certainly not going to be easy, but I don't want to work in an easy state. I want to do the work where it needs to be done."