



## Claire Herdegen

**Majors:** Accounting, international business, Spanish for professional use

**Activities:** Augustana Choir, Delta Chi Theta sorority

**Internships:** Special needs intern with Tal Como Eres in Seville, Spain; grant-writing intern with Common Threads in Chicago; sales and marketing intern with Retrofit, Inc. in Chicago; Finance Leadership Program intern—Controllership with Aon Service Corp. in Chicago

**Post-grad plans:** I will be working as a Finance Leadership Program analyst with Aon Service Corp. in Chicago.

“Claire has been a joyous member of my voice studio for the past four years. Her passionate engagement with life is something she always brings with her to all her involvements, including voice lessons, and that is a great privilege to participate in. She has taken advantage of so many opportunities available to her here at Augustana, and I see that same adventurous determination not to waste the gift of her life as she embarks on her professional career.”

— Dr. Michelle Crouch, assistant professor,  
music

## MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2018

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

### Why Augustana?

I wanted to be great and succeed at many things, rather than be specialized in one area. I also knew I learned best in a small classroom environment with one-on-one faculty interaction. Augustana is the perfect place to find both of those qualities.

### Are you where you thought you'd be when you first came to campus?

I am absolutely nowhere near where I thought I would be when I first came to Augie. I began college as a psychology and Spanish major with the intention of pursuing a career as a psychologist.

### Who helped you get to where you are now?

I think the better question would be who didn't help me get to where I am now. However, there are a few professors who simply cannot be excluded from my college story (in no particular order):

Dr. Araceli Masterson (Spanish) – Who showed me the world

Dr. Michelle Crouch (Music) – Who gave me a voice

Dr. Gregory Tapis (Accounting) – Who strengthened my confidence

Dr. David Crowe (English) – Who solidified my personal beliefs, writing and research abilities

Mamata Marmé (Business) – Who believed in me

Dr. Jon Hurty (Music) – Who brightened dark days

Dr. John Delaney (Accounting) – Who pushed me to seek opportunities

Dr. Megan Havard (Spanish) – Who made me comfortable in an unfamiliar space

Each of these professors has contributed to my college experience in ways that I never imagined possible. I've included their departments to highlight that my support system lies all across the Augustana community, not merely one section.

### Peak experience?

It is impossible to choose a single experience. However, my peak experiences at Augustana all have a common theme: travel. Augustana has allowed me to partake in three (soon to be four) study abroad experiences. These include Seville, Spain fall term 2015, Norway during spring break 2015, and China during the summer of 2017. These experiences provided me insight into cultures much different than my own through classes, and then through firsthand experience. I spent time learning, reading and speaking entirely in Spanish. I drove dogsleds, learned about the Sami people and saw the Northern Lights. I sang with Chambers Singers in Chinese performance halls with students from eight other countries. I don't think these experiences need further explanation to show how they've impacted my Augustana experience.

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### What surprised you?

I am so much stronger than I ever allowed myself to be. I was the biggest obstacle standing in the way of my own success. During these past four years, I've learned it is essential to be unabashedly yourself. Believe in yourself and what you are doing; otherwise, you are doing yourself a disservice.

### How did you use Augie Choice?

I've saved my Augie Choice all four years for the Augustana Choir's international tour this June. We will be there for three weeks singing in Spain, France and Sweden.

### What will you miss the most?

Besides the beautiful campus, the two things I will miss the most are the faculty and living within five minutes of all of my best friends.

### Advice for the Class of 2022?

Be comfortable with the uncomfortable. There is not one person who comes to college and feels that they instantly know their path, their people and their place. Augustana is a fantastic place to discover all of these things, but know that part of getting to those experiences is embracing the situations where you feel vulnerable. Those moments will set the tone for the entirety of your college career. Cherish them because four years later, you'll look back and wish you could relive them indefinitely.