



Payton Petruchuis

Majors: Psychology, philosophy

Activities: Phi Rho sorority, Psi Chi (psychology)

Internships: A 10-week clinical experience opportunity where I shadowed a school counselor at Riverdale Heights Elementary School

Post-grad plans: I've accepted a graduate assistantship in the College of Education at Northern Illinois University, where I will pursue a graduate degree in counseling, hoping to fulfill my desire to be a licensed school counselor.

“Payton has chosen her double major well.

As a psychology major, she has studied human beings under an empirical lens, using experimental tools; as a philosophy major, she has considered them more abstractly, as ethical and spiritual beings. In the process, she has herself become a fully developed person, alive to the diversity of her natural and social surroundings, equipped with the means to learn about and improve them. And she has developed her natural gifts of empathy, idealism and moral virtue, promising to deepen and extend them and enrich the rest of us.”

— Dr. Roman Bonzon, professor, philosophy

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2018

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I chose Augustana primarily based on my intuition. It sounds absolutely ridiculous to make such a monumental decision based on a ‘feeling,’ but I did, and it turned out to be just about the best decision I’ve ever made. All it took for me was a quick tour of campus to know this is where I wanted to be...ironic because my mother forced the campus visit on me to begin with!

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

Ha! Absolutely not. I came in thinking I would be some kind of scientist. That’s where Augustana has a leg-up on other schools; the liberal arts education essentially forces you to expose yourself to subjects you never would’ve otherwise come into contact with. Trying to gain all of my perspectives and requirements to graduate actually helped me fall in love with psychology and philosophy—because of the way Augustana does ‘school,’ I realized I enjoyed learning about people more than I did science.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

The list is longer than my character limit, I can guarantee you that! I’ve been very fortunate to be surrounded with a network of genuine people who are equal parts supportive and kind-hearted. The very cliché but very necessary answer is my parents, the two who have helped to fund the crazy journey that’s been the last four years and have always encouraged me to chase after what makes me happy. The faculty and staff members at Augustana who have helped to fuel my imagination and academic success: Dr. Jayne Rose, Dr. Roman Bonzon, Dr. Jessica Schultz, Dr. Dan Cortis, Dr. Douglas Parvin, Professor Rebecca Wee, and countless others. Also, a very necessary shout-out to my Phi Rho sorority sisters who have helped to create a home away from home during my time here.

Peak experience?

One peak experience is pretty difficult for me to narrow down, especially because my four years here as a whole have been pretty pivotal in defining me as a person. I think where I am in my life now, during the last five weeks of my undergraduate career, is where I feel is my peak. It sounds a little funny, but because I have to say good-bye to all of this relatively soon, I am really relishing in the life I’ve made for myself here and can truly appreciate all the relationships, opportunities and experiences I was fortunate enough to have. This a reflective period for me, one in which I am truly acknowledging how good I’ve had it and how my undergraduate life at Augustana will positively impact my adulthood.

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What surprised you?

These four years have been a pretty big self-esteem booster for me. I came in without knowing anyone, not truly knowing what I wanted to do with my life, and not even really knowing who I was yet. If I've learned anything, it's that I can make things happen. I have a voice capable of making people listen. I have the ability to be a leader, to go out into the world and foster meaningful relationships, make a difference in my community, make decisions that help make the world a better place, and do work that is meaningful to me.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I took a 10-day spring break trip to Guatemala with Dr. Jayne Rose, Dr. Jessica Schultz and 19 other students! While we were there, we mostly educated ourselves regarding the people of the country, children specifically, and their day-to-day lives. We traveled to schools, communities, marketplaces, environmental organizations and a variety of other organizations. It was an experience that is hard to put into so few words but absolutely worth discussing! Ask me about it!

What will you miss the most?

The people, both students and faculty. Augustana has such an inclusive, fun and supportive culture that will be very difficult for me to say good-bye to. There's something pretty special about the people who decide to go here and the people who work here.

Advice for the Class of 2022?

Go out and do it all. Every bit of it.