



Peyton Achs

Major: Elementary education (with K-12 Reading Teacher Endorsement)

Activities: Varsity volleyball, Delta Chi Theta sorority

Internship: Student teacher at Eugene Field Elementary School in Rock Island, Ill.

Post-grad plans: Applying for jobs in the Quad-City area, as well as Florida and South Carolina

“I have known Peyton for three years. She is part of the first group to complete the Reading Teacher Endorsement Program. Peyton is flexible, patient and enthusiastic in fulfilling responsibilities related to coursework, clinical practicum, research and engaging with other professionals. The additional coursework, clinical and research Peyton completed for the Reading Teacher Endorsement revealed her passion for teaching literacy as well as her potential in the literacy field. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with her, and I wish her the best of luck!”

— Dr. Danielle Beliveau-Derion, assistant professor, education

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2018

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I am a transfer student so my path to Augustana was a little different. I wanted a school that would give me the ‘college experience’ where I could be involved, athletically and socially. I also wanted small class sizes where I would know my professors, and they would know me. I really just wanted to be proud of where I went to school. My freshman year I learned a lot about myself and what I wanted from a school, and I think I needed that year in order to be successful here and achieve and appreciate that ‘college experience.’

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

Yes, but not without some doubts. I knew coming into college that I wanted to be a teacher; however, there were a few obstacles I had to face to achieve this goal. I admit there were times I had to consider other career paths, but the support and dedication I had got me to graduation.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

Many people helped me to be where I am today. My mom is a huge support for me and is my main inspiration to become a teacher.

My advisor, Randy Hengst, guided me through the program and always had a back-up plan, which calmed a lot of my nerves. Deborah Bracke’s optimism is contagious and got me through many tough times. Danielle Beliveau-Derion is an inspiration to me in many ways; she is very driven and organized while still approachable and fun, and I admire that. I was able to be a part of the first Reading Teacher Endorsement Program, which has been a very valuable experience.

My friends were also a huge support, whether we were studying on the third floor of the lib or cracking jokes in the Brew. Delta Chi also gave me many lifelong friends and encouraged me to embrace who I am and try new things.

Peak experience?

I had many peak experiences; however, one that seems to stand out was passing the edTPA. The edTPA is a performance-based assessment that aspiring teachers have to complete during student teaching in order to get their license. It is a much anticipated assessment, and it felt like we spent two years preparing for it (which we did). It was a proud and liberating moment when I passed with flying colors, and it made me feel very prepared for the workforce.

What surprised you?

I think I am surprised about my academic success. School can sometimes be difficult for me, which is a main reason why I wanted to get into education because I understand the struggle and want to be able to help those, who like me, don’t always get it the first time. I am surprised, but more proud of how far I have come, and I am excited to take what I have learned so my future students can say the same!

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How did you use Augie Choice?

The volleyball team took a trip to Australia over Christmas break last year, and I used my Augie Choice to help pay for the trip. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I had a great time. I climbed the Sydney Bridge, held a koala and snorkeled on Spooky Island! Oh and maybe played a game or two of volleyball. It was truly a remarkable experience, and I am extremely thankful for all the memories.

What will you miss the most?

I will miss my friends, but more so how accessible we all are. We all live blocks away from each other, and I will miss being able to hang out spontaneously. Now that we are graduating and moving on, it is exciting to see everyone enter our career paths, but also sad that we will not be all in the same city anymore. Thank god for facetime—amiright.

Advice for the Class of 2022?

Take advantage of all the opportunities Augie has to offer. The next four years go so fast so try not to get lost in the moment and really take time to enjoy it.