



## Nicolette Sliwa

**Major:** Biology (pre-veterinary medicine)

**Minors:** History, biochemistry

**Activities:** Lindahl Biology Club, History Club, club softball, Omicron Delta Kappa, TriBeta, Mortar Board, Augustana Student Medical Reserve Corps, peer tutor

**Post-grad plans:** Attend the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine in the fall

“Nicolette’s excitement for learning was evident from day one, and she has a great ability to connect the many facets of biology as well as areas outside the sciences. She combines her talents of writing and content knowledge to really dig deep into issues and doesn’t approach learning only for the simple acquisition of facts. She wants to make a difference in how we approach today’s complex world.”

— Dr. Jason Koontz, associate professor, biology

## MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2017

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

### Why Augustana?

I was first attracted to Augie by the 3:4 program with the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine, which turned out to be a great opportunity. I’ve also always appreciated the personal connections and support systems associated with going to smaller schools. And who could say ‘no’ after seeing the slough in the spring?

### Are you where you thought you’d be four years ago?

Yes, and no. Upon entering Augie, I had the complete intention of following the 3:4 program with the University of Illinois—three years here, four years there. Yet, here I am, still on the Augustana campus to finish my senior year! I am incredibly grateful the U. of I. allows students to defer their acceptance for one year and stretch it to a ‘4:4’ program so I wouldn’t lose out on a year’s worth of Augie memories, classes, professors and campus life. Even though I turned down the money-saving route, I think this speaks as to how much I value my time here, and I haven’t regretted this decision once. In addition, I had no idea I’d be graduating with a history minor! I came to Augie with a simple side interest in the discipline, thinking that’s about as far as it would ever go. Augie does a great job at fostering and encouraging these interests, which allowed me to turn a hobby into a minor and gain critical historical thinking and writing skills along the way.

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

First and foremost, I cannot express how much I appreciate my family, specifically the encouragement of my mom and two aunts. They’ve always served as invaluable role models and have always been there in support, whether it be financially or through the daily phone calls and texts. And on campus, the entire biology department has been absolutely fantastic. I’d especially like to thank Dr. Koontz for his utmost dedication to his students (I’ve received revised Senior Inquiry drafts back after 10 p.m. because he felt inclined to make sure I had feedback that day). Inspiring college students to make environmentally conscious decisions is no easy task, and he most assuredly changed my mindset throughout the three courses I’ve had the pleasure of taking with him. Thank you to my advisor, Dr. Muir, for his guidance and genuine concern that I was getting into the classes I needed, as well as the chats about my White Sox and his Tigers. And a big thank you to both my first-year advisor, Connie Ghinazzi, and chemistry professor, Dr. Wilmsmeyer, for help on a very critical component of my vet school application. And in the history department, thank you to Dr. Calder for encouraging me with that brief note that I take up a history minor, as well as Drs. Simonsen and Leech for their unprecedented enthusiasm for the discipline that always made my multiple classes with them so memorable and engaging.

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### A peak experience?

The summer going into my junior year I participated in the annual medical service-learning trip to Nicaragua through ACHOO/JETS. I not only assisted local veterinarians in various settings around Nicaragua, but also experienced the culture, history, cuisine and most importantly—the people—of the country throughout the two-week trip. It made me feel as if I were part of something much bigger than myself that was incredibly worthwhile, and Augie (with the dedication and planning of Dr. Wegman-Geedey) made this opportunity possible.

### What surprised you?

I have definitely broadened my food horizons, thanks to my slightly more culinary-adventurous friends! The international dinner night in the dining hall is one of my favorite meals on campus, and Osaka in Moline for sushi is our go-to restaurant.

### How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to help cover the costs of the medical service-learning trip to Nicaragua.

### What will you miss the most?

I will miss the professors and my fellow students—it's the people on this campus that make this place special. It's almost impossible to walk from one building to another without saying hello to at least a handful of students or a professor you had as a first-year who still remembers your name.

### Advice for the Class of 2021?

You will take quite a few classes that aren't necessarily within your major. Don't view these as simply 'boxes to check,' but embrace them and take advantage of your liberal arts education! While your major may not necessarily do a '180' from your freshman to senior year, you might pick up an unexpected minor, and it's a great way to get to meet students and professors outside of your discipline.