



Erin Ansinha

Major: Neuroscience

Minor: Biology

Activities: Delta Chi Theta sorority, Psi Chi (psychology)

Post-grad plans: Research assistant in a neuroscience lab

“Erin’s passion for neuroscience has led her to thrive in multiple research opportunities, including her Senior Inquiry project. She is curious and self-reflective and has pushed herself to grow as a person and student during her time at Augustana.”

— Dr. Rupa G. Gordon, assistant professor, psychology and neuroscience

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2018

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I liked the idea of not being ‘just another number.’ The campus was welcoming, and the small-school atmosphere seemed like it would set up any student for success.

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

Not at all. I was interested in chemistry with a pre-medicine track on my mind, and then I took my first neuroscience course and was hooked. I became super interested in the research aspect of neuroscience and feel that the opportunities to find meaningful work in this field are endless.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

I owe my success to so many professors, it’s hard to condense the list! Dr. Corts has been such an invaluable resource for me. I did my Senior Inquiry in neuroscience with him, and ever since my first term, he has given me his undivided attention whenever I’ve needed it. I can’t thank him enough for always making my concerns and questions feel worthy of his time.

Dr. Gordon and Dr. Muir were my research advisors who gave me opportunities to explore what conducting research is like from different perspectives. They’ve been great resources for guiding me through my strengths and weaknesses. Both professors always made me want to better myself as a student and as a researcher, and I am so grateful for the lessons I learned through experiences with them that have shaped my interests and goals.

Lastly, Dr. Stough and Dr. Gehler: my academic advisors. These two never failed to make me feel as if they would help me figure out how to tackle any issue I encountered. I know it’s their duty to help me figure out my schedule and best options, but both of them went above and beyond and always came off so selfless. I always felt like they were there for me whether it had to do with anything academic or not.

Peak experience?

My peak experience was definitely finishing my Senior Inquiry this past fall. Because I want to pursue a career in research, it was an amazing feeling to have designed and completed a study almost entirely independently (great guidance from Dr. Corts along the way). I learned a lot about responsibility and managing my time because the only person who could let me down was me! I love what I was able to produce and what I took away from the experience, and it confirmed my passion for research.

What surprised you?

I have a lot more patience than I thought! I have misophonia, so I have no patience when it comes to annoying sounds, but other than that, I have found that I am able to handle overcoming obstacles and setbacks better than I think I used to. After encountering a number of obstacles and setbacks during my time at Augustana, I can honestly say that patience is one absolutely necessary key to success. Not everything comes easy, but perseverance pays off!

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How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to do research with Dr. Muir in the summer before my senior year. We are studying hibernation in painted turtles, and our research has continued throughout the year. This spring, I will hand the project off to another lucky student looking to do research with Dr. Muir!

What will you miss the most?

I'm going to miss all the familiar faces around campus and going home to five of my very best friends. People say they have a love-hate relationship with the 'Augie Bubble,' but the environment here is so irreplaceable, I can't help but love it and never want to find my way out.

Advice for the Class of 2022?

Take care of yourself. College is hard. It's okay if you have to make some tradeoffs as long as you can honestly admit to yourself that you are still doing your absolute best. Always let your professors know what's going on if it's something they should know. Patience, honesty, transparency and good communication = four years well spent.