



Lan Dang

Majors: Applied mathematics, biochemistry

Activities: Pi Mu Epsilon (mathematics), Phi Beta Kappa, Learning Commons (chemistry and math tutor)

Internships: Summer internship at Center for Drug Discovery, Baylor College of Medicine (2017); math research with Dr. Andrew Sward (2016-2017); PIC Math research with Dr. Stacey Rodman (2016-2017)

Post-grad plans: Attending Baylor College of Medicine for Ph.D. program in quantitative and computational biomedical science

“Lan is an exceptional mathematician and scientist, with a strong moral fiber and potential to accomplish great things. She has worked on a number of research projects that highlight her dedication, passion and creative thinking in the field of mathematics. It has been a pleasure working with Lan to help develop her potential over the past four years, and she will be missed by all of the faculty in the math department.”

— Dr. Andrew Sward, assistant professor, mathematics

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2018

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

Before I came to the United States, I had no idea about which schools I would want to go to or what the schools looked like. I chose Augustana because it offered me the best financial package. I also had a very great conversation with Liz Nino in the admissions office so I decided to go here. After four years, I do not regret my decision, and I feel I gained so much here in the Augie community.

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

When I came to campus, I wanted to major in biochemistry/ biology and go to medical school. However, after a couple of math classes, I felt really interested, and I decided to be a math major. For my doctorate, I will study computational biomedical sciences, where I can use math to serve my biomedical interest. In general, I am in a different position from where I thought I would be when I came here, but I am really happy with it.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

I must say thanks to all of my math professors—Dr. Andrew Sward, Dr. Tom Bengtson, Dr. Jon Clauss, Dr. Stacey Rodman—who are always willing to do research and independent studies with me to give me opportunities to learn and do whatever I want. Also, I need to say thanks to Dr. Kurt Christoffel in the department of chemistry as well for being very harsh on me. He forces me to reach my limit, and I think it helps me to become a stronger person. I also want to say thanks to Dr. Scott Gehler for the interesting Human Physiology course and all his dedication to me and my learning process. Last but not least, I must thank Dr. Heidi Stork for the Texas Medical Center (TMC) summer internship opportunity. This opportunity changed my career orientation, and I learned a lot from that great summer.

Peak experience?

I have had a lot of cool experiences, and it's hard to pick one. In terms of academics, I must say the TMC internship was my peak experience. I had a wonderful summer, I met many cool people and I learned a lot. My advisor, Dr. Melek Ucisik, helped me not only during the summer but also now, and I feel like I earned a valuable lifetime relationship.

What surprised you?

In these past four years, I realized that I can do way more than I used to think I could. I am surprised that I can manage to work 20 hours and take four heavy classes and two labs at the same time and still survive.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice for my TMC internship in summer 2017.

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What will you miss the most?

I will miss all of my afternoon tea talks with Dr. Bengtson, all Putnam practices (and dinners) with Dr. Sward and all the good jokes of Dr. Clauss. I will also miss my time at the Brew with all sweetest people in the world.

Advice for the Class of 2022?

Augustana is a relatively small school; there are several courses that are not offered here. However, it does not mean that you cannot learn about the things you are interested in. If you really want to learn something, just ask a professor who has the same interest, and he or she will be more than willing to help.