



## Ninna Mendoza

**Majors:** Pre-medicine, Spanish for professional use

**Minor:** Public health

**Activities:** The Campus Kitchen at Augustana College, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Reading/Writing Center tutor, Omicron Delta Kappa (honor society), Zeta Phi Kappa sorority, Phi Beta Kappa

**Internship:** I did research at Baylor College of Medicine's Children's Nutrition Research Center through the Texas Medical Center Summer Research Internship Program.

**Post-grad plans:** I will be doing a gap year fellowship in Alabama with the nonprofit Project Horseshoe Farm, which contrary to the name is actually focused on community health and education initiatives.

“In my first-year writing class, Ninna went above and beyond on every assignment. At year's end, she was awarded the prestigious Tredway Library Prize for First-Year Research. As a Reading/Writing Center tutor, she's used her success to inspire and empower her peers to strive for similarly big goals. Ultimately, Ninna plans to be a physician; with her open-minded, collaborative attitude, she's the type of person I would want as my physician.”

— Lucas Street, director of the Reading/Writing Center, and instructor, first-year inquiry and English

## MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2018

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

### Why Augustana?

I actually first visited on my birthday and let me say, it was a wonderful way to spend the day. I was amazed at how warm and welcoming everyone was. As an aspiring pre-med, I was also quite impressed with all the medical-related opportunities offered, and of course, the gorgeous campus was an added bonus.

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

Yes and no. I have always been a person who likes to do a lot, so I'm not surprised that I'm pretty involved on campus. As a first-year, though, my plan was to go straight to medical school after college. However, after studying abroad, I realized there was more to experience in the world, and I wanted to take advantage of the rare chunk of time that a gap year offers to experience learning in a way that goes beyond the classroom walls.

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

Undoubtedly, my parents. They have always encouraged me to keep God at the forefront as I go for my dreams, and they have been so supportive by praying for me, encouraging me and believing in me.

Also, my professors. They make Augie unique by how caring and passionate they are about their students. Being able to actually get to know my professors and have them know me is something that I don't think I would have experienced at a bigger school.

Finally, my friends. I have met incredible people who have inspired me, listened to me and laughed with me through the years. They have been my second family at college.

### Peak experience?

Serving our first meal through the affiliate nonprofit chapter (Campus Kitchen) that my friend and I co-founded. After nine months of hard work to get to that point, it's a feeling like no other when you see the results of something you've put your heart and soul into.

### What surprised you?

I can thrive when I am pushed outside of my comfort zone. Whether it was studying abroad in Spain or conducting research in Texas, each year I have had an opportunity that challenged me and allowed me to grow personally, professionally and spiritually.

### How did you use Augie Choice?

The J.E.T.S. (Joining Education Through Service) service learning medical trip to Nicaragua.

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### What will you miss the most?

All the coffee shops I have discovered! Through finding all these precious gems, I discovered the charm of the QC. On a more sentimental note, I will miss the community here. Without fail, I can always walk around and see at least two friendly faces to say hello to.

### Advice for the Class of 2022?

It's all about your mindset and attitude. Embrace the highs. Push through the lows. Find your passions. You never know who you will become. Your experience is shaped by how you choose to use your time here, so take advantage of all Augie has to offer!