



Leo Nguyen

Majors: Political science-international relations, business administration-marketing

Activities: Vietnamese Student Association, Delta Omega Nu fraternity

Internships: Campaign intern at Cheri Bustos for Congress; policy intern at the Coalition on Human Needs in Washington, D.C.; communications intern at Main Street Alliance in Washington, D.C.

Post-grad plans: Work as a communications associate at the Coalition on Human Needs in Washington, D.C.

“Leo has contributed a great deal to the growth in and support of Augustana’s international student population. In his admissions position, he helps recruit international students, including by representing our school at college recruitment fairs in Vietnam. He founded Augustana’s Vietnamese Student Association, an organization that gives so much to our campus community, including the annual Tet celebration. Leo’s internships at nonprofit organizations in Washington, D.C., are impressive, and I expect he will draw on these varied college experiences to have the impressive career he is capable of.”

— Dr. Ann Ericson, professor, business administration

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2018

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

As an international student, I didn’t have any geographical preferences to base my decision on. Augustana offered me a generous scholarship, and four years later, here I am. But the experience and the memories have proven that I made the right choice.

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

I was thinking that I would like to become an engineer. However, after the first two years of exploring the liberal arts curriculum, I decided to pursue politics. I wouldn’t have been able to realize that and pursue what I truly want without the encouragement of my advisors. Deciding what you are going to do for the rest of your life at 18 years old is impossible. The liberal arts curriculum really allowed me to try out different things.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

Professor Xiaowen [Zhang] and Professor Mariano [Magalhães] pushed me to explore all aspects of politics and provide professional feedback that I need for my work, even though it is not really related to any classes. My business advisor, Mamata Marmé, also helped me to carefully plan out my courses throughout, so I could fit two majors and a study-away experience while still managing to graduate within four years. Also, thank you to Dr. Ann Ericson for giving me the opportunity to conduct an undergraduate research about my favorite drink: Vietnamese coffee. Finally, a huge shout-out goes to Liz Nino, director of international admissions, whom I have worked under all four years. Liz helped me tremendously in gaining professional skills and learning how to work well in a fast-paced and competitive environment.

Peak experience?

I participated in the Washington, D.C., term program. I spent four months in the program and an additional two months at an internship that I found through the first placement. The experience was amazing and filled with learning moments. I am heading back to the District in a month; it is super exciting just like the first time.

What surprised you?

Everyone has gone through hard times, and sometimes what we need is just a little luck. I learned that to be kind with people around you is the best thing anyone can do because everyone is already fighting their own battles.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to intern at the Congressional Campaign for Representative Cheri Bustos in Rock Island. This experience served as a stepping stone for me to gain professional political experience that helps distinguish my résumé from others.

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What will you miss the most?

I will definitely miss the people the most: my professors, my friends, my fraternity brothers, the helpful staff who have helped me throughout my four years at Augie.

Advice for the Class of 2022?

Try to see life from others' perspectives, respond to problems with kindness and humor, take an astronomy class and gaze at the stars, smile with people you walk by, savor the little moment of joys, and lastly: college is what YOU made of it.