



## Kari Vance

**Major:** Neuroscience

**Activities:** Phi Beta Kappa, Delta Chi Theta sorority

**Internships:** In the summer of 2016, I was an intern at the University of Iowa Interdisciplinary Research Program in Genetics.

**Post-grad plans:** Work as a research assistant for a year or two before pursuing a Ph.D. in neuroscience

“Kari has a take-no-prisoners approach to academic life that is remarkable. One example of this approach occurred toward the end of our study-away program in Germany while we were out to dinner with a group of neurophilosophers at a beautiful old church. Earlier that day, during a presentation Kari had made, a professor indicated that he disagreed with one of her key arguments. Some of us might just let it go, but not Kari. Before we had even ordered our meals, she decided to straighten him out. It took some time but eventually he came to see it her way. That’s conviction, and she’s got it to spare.”

— Dr. Ian Harrington, associate professor, psychology and neuroscience

## MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2018

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

### Why Augustana?

Augustana was originally on my short list of schools because it is one of only a few schools with an outstanding neuroscience program. I chose to attend Augustana because when I visited I was met with enthusiasm from both the students and faculty unlike any other college. I could tell that the community cared for me before I was even officially part of it.

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

Quite honestly, no. When I came to college, I thought I would graduate with a degree, some factual knowledge and a few friends. While I will graduate with all those things, I will leave this campus with so much more. Augie has given me experiential knowledge in neuroscience, the chance to travel to world-renowned research facilities, and an entire community of friends that will last a lifetime. Seventeen-year-old me would have never dreamed that I would leave this community with such invaluable experiences.

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

Outside of the tremendous support of my parents and friends, my professors have been the largest contributors to my success. Because of the small class sizes, my professors got to know me quickly and offer more guidance for my specific academic goals. My first year at Augie, Dr. Jessica Schultz noticed that I had a passion for research and went out of her way to help me get involved in research on campus. Since then, I have remained a part of multiple research projects and gained many mentors along the way.

I have been lucky to work with Dr. Matthew Rosenthal for three years. He has taught me a host of technical skills and has become someone that I will always turn to for advice. He has shown great interest in my education, which has resulted in much of my professional development.

Dr. Ian Harrington and Dr. Heidi Storl have also greatly impacted my growth as a student. They have facilitated and encouraged my very persistent question-asking and challenged me to produce high-caliber work.

My advisor, Dr. Shara Stough, has always guided me through academia, but more recently she has taught me so much more. I have learned from her how to balance academic goals with being an active member of a community. Dr. Schultz has remained a support system for me throughout my four years and also has offered me guidance when I have needed it the most.

These mentors have not only shown me the ropes to research practices but also given me the sense of what it truly means to be a part of an academic community.

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### Peak experience?

Presenting my Senior Inquiry is the peak of my time here. This presentation will be a culmination of everything I have learned here at Augie; I will present my research project that represents all the technical skills I have gained to my amazing friends and mentors. I couldn't think of a better way to wrap up my time at Augustana.

### What surprised you?

I learned that I thrive in a challenging environment and have a great appreciation for academia. Before I came to Augustana, I didn't put a lot of effort into my schoolwork. The environment here facilitates hard work and has pushed me to be my best. Teenage me would be surprised to hear that I now say that I am excited to go to class and participate in academic extra-curriculars.

### How did you use Augie Choice?

I used Augie Choice to help fund my summer internship at the University of Iowa. Even though I had a stipend position, the funds from Augie Choice made it possible for me to live in Iowa City comfortably and truly enjoy my time experiencing a new city. Without Augie Choice, I wouldn't have been able to have had the full experience of being an intern at a large university.

### What will you miss the most?

I will greatly miss being an active member of the Augie community. Augustana has truly become my second home, and I do not foresee having that same sense of community elsewhere.

### Advice for the Class of 2022?

Don't feel as if you must fit into a certain mold! Augustana offers so many chances to take classes outside of your comfort zone and opportunities to get involved in an array of areas. Use this time to try new things and make new connections.