



Olivia Zolnik

Majors: Biology (pre-optometry), neuroscience

Minor: Biochemistry

Activities: Reading/Writing Center tutor, TriBeta (biology), Psi Chi (psychology), Mortar Board Honor Society, Phi Beta Kappa

Internship: Summer Undergraduate Research Program at the University of Iowa

Post-grad plans: I will attend Indiana University College of Optometry.

“When Katie Hanson and I travel in Norway with Augie students every other year, there are a few kids we want to adopt. In 2016, Olivia Zolnik was one of them. She was curious every day, treated us like friends, and wanted to learn about healthcare models because she plans to be an effective healthcare professional. It was a no-brainer to invite Olivia to write a Freistat Grant and travel to Germany and Poland. She earned it!”

— Dr. David Crowe, professor, English

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2018

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I chose Augustana because of the strong biology program, small class sizes and community atmosphere. I wanted to attend a school that made me feel like more than a number and cared about my personal success.

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

Although I came in with the plan to pursue pre-optometry and that is where I have ended up, I have learned much more about myself and been able to explore numerous opportunities. I pursued topics I was interested in, resulting in another major and minor and took advantage of many possibilities like internships, study abroad and others.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

I would have to thank my family, friends and Augustana faculty for their continued support. They have pushed me to be the best version of myself and pursue my interests.

Peak experience?

A peak experience would have to be the summer following my junior year. I was awarded the Freistat Peace Studies Grant, which I used to travel to Poland and Germany to learn about their healthcare systems and historical relation to peace. I combined my love of learning with my love of traveling to create an original project.

What surprised you?

I have learned to believe in myself. Sometimes you can get bogged down with classes, grades, friends, and just the hustle and bustle of every day and start to second-guess everything. It is important to take a minute, identify what is most important to you and believe in your abilities to get it done.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to study abroad in Norway. This was an amazing experience that included Viking ships, dog sledding, seeing the Northern Lights, sailing through a fjord and breathtaking views.

What will you miss the most?

Walking around campus, you always see a familiar face, so I have to say I will miss the people within this great community the most.

Advice for the Class of 2022?

Pursue what interests you and don't let any possibilities pass you by. Four years may seem like a long time, but it will go by quickly and you do not want to regret not traveling, not taking an interesting class or not pursuing new opportunities. Find a dream or goal and chase it.