



Katie Laschanzky

Major: Biology

Minors: Biochemistry, Scandinavian studies

Activities: Augustana Fencing Club, Learning Commons (biology and Swedish tutor), Phi Beta Kappa

Internships: Microbiology and fermentation biology research assistant with Grain Processing Corporation, Muscatine, Iowa (two summers); biology research and lab proctoring with Dr. Dara Wegman-Geedey at Augustana

Post-grad plans: In the fall, I will be moving to Sweden to pursue a master's in molecular biology at Lund University.

“Inquisitive, thoughtful, hard-working—Katie was the ideal research student to work with over the past four months. She’s been a true junior colleague as we learned the quirks of a new piece of equipment and modified (and re-modified!) our protocol to enhance efficiency. Her ideas and insights pushed me to consider new data interpretations and questions for future studies. I’ll definitely miss Katie’s energy and enthusiasm next year, but can’t wait to hear what project she’ll undertake for her master’s at Lund University in Sweden!”

— Dr. Dara Wegman-Geedey, professor, biology

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2018

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

Being a first-generation college student, I had no idea what to look for when choosing a school. But after visiting Augustana and seeing how personally invested all of the faculty and staff were in helping their students become the best that they can be, I knew I didn’t want to be anywhere else.

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

Not at all. Over the last four years, I have learned an entire new language and discovered a love for microorganisms.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

More people than there is space to list here! To name a few, Dr. Dara Wegman-Geedey and Dr. Lori Scott in the biology department have both been key to my success. Both believed in me and pushed me to achieve my full potential in the lab. All of the Scandinavian studies faculty helped me find a way to take my passions abroad and find a second home in Sweden.

Peak experience?

Completing a capstone research project on health behaviors associated with contact lens contamination allowed me to formally incorporate four years of practical skills and knowledge. Developing lab methods and implementing them made me realize how much I truly enjoy research and gave me the practical experience needed to pursue a successful academic career.

What surprised you?

I am most surprised by the amount that I have grown as a person. By completing independent research projects, taking on leadership roles and serving as a mentor to my peers, I gained confidence and competence in areas I never anticipated.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to fund a semester exchange with Uppsala University in Sweden. There I got the chance to study biology at a top research university while improving my Swedish language skills.

What will you miss the most?

All of the wonderful people that I have met on campus. Some of my favorite memories include all the brunches with my fellow fencers and discussing everything from Viking runestones to soil microbes with my favorite professors.

Advice for the Class of 2022?

Don’t be afraid to try something new! Whether it’s trying a new activity or taking a class completely unrelated to your major, you never know what opportunities will present themselves or where they will take you!