



Brandon Wilkerson

Majors: Mathematics for secondary education

Activities: Varsity cross country/track & field (All-American), Mortar Board

Internships: Jamaica school-based internship

Post-grad plans: Get a teaching job in the area or by family

“Brandon and I were discussing classes he needed to take to meet his requirements. He told me he intended to take Dr. Paul Olsen’s African American Literature class as an elective. Brandon did not need this class to graduate, and it would certainly be a lot of extra work. He wanted to take it because he knew Dr. Olsen was a great teacher, and he wanted to learn the material for the sake of learning and growing as a person. I was so inspired by his attitude that I took the class with him (yes, it was a great class!). Brandon encapsulates what Augustana is all about.”

— Dr. Mike Egan, associate dean of academic affairs and associate professor of education

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2019

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I chose Augustana for a variety of reasons. The main reason though is that during my visits, Augustana felt like home and where I could be the most successful in my academic career as well as my extracurricular activities.

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

No, not at all. I came into college undecided but leaning toward something in the business field. Sometime in the middle of my freshman year I found my way to the math education major and have just allowed that to guide me through the rest of my college career.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

So many people helped me get to where I am now. Keith Sands was the first student who really got me interested in education when I was a freshman. Dr. Stacey Rodman made me fall in love with math in my first math class at Augustana, and Dr. Mike Egan has helped me grow to be a better teacher and person throughout my college experience. Many other professors have made a profound difference in my Augustana career, but I won’t list every single one. My family has also helped by being supportive of whatever decisions I have made, which has helped tremendously.

Peak experience?

My peak experience was going to Jamaica during my sophomore year for a very unique study abroad opportunity. We ended up teaching at an all-girls school in Kingston, and Dr. Egan even pushed me to lead-teach a lesson. At that point I had taken only one or two education classes so I was very scared, but I was able to do it with their help, and I exited my comfort zone. Also, being an All-American in track and field was an amazing experience that I will never forget.

What surprised you?

I learned that it is okay to feel outside my comfort zone to experience new things. I believe I have come out of my shell here at Augustana and because of that I have experienced many awesome opportunities.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used Augie Choice to fund my student-teaching experience.

What will you miss the most?

I will miss the people the most. I have met some of the best people I have ever known here, and I will miss seeing them every day.

Advice for the Class of 2023?

Be positive and supportive. It’s so easy to find a way to complain or be annoyed by situations, but trying to be optimistic and positive will make the whole experience better.