



Autumn Anderson

High school: Streamwood High School

Hometown: Streamwood, Ill.

Majors: Psychology, pre-medicine

Minor: Art

Activities: Cheerleading, Sigma Pi Delta sorority

Internships: Robert Young Center for Community Public Health; Vera French Mental Health Center

Post-grad plans: Direct-Entry Masters Program through Trinity College of Nursing and Health Sciences

“Autumn provides a great example of how much learning and growth happen outside of the classroom. As an academic, I enjoyed our years of research collaboration, culminating in a presentation at a professional conference. But my favorite part of being Autumn’s advisor was watching her career interests develop, especially during her endowed summer internship. She’s graduating with so much confidence, enthusiasm and a real sense of purpose—I hope that our incoming students will follow her example.”

— Dr. Dan Corts, professor, psychology and neuroscience

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

Surprisingly Augustana was not originally on my radar, but I was intrigued by its pre-vet program. After further investigation, I heard nothing but good news about what Augie had to offer students.

During my first visit to Augie’s beautiful campus, I fell in love with the buildings, the opportunities and the experience. I soon realized that I could call this place home. From that moment and every moment since, I have never regretted my decision to commit to be an Augustana Viking.

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

I committed to Augustana thinking I was going to be a biology major with a pre-vet focus. However, I soon discovered that I was not passionate about this childhood career goal anymore. Through required perspective classes, I was able to discover my true passion for psychology as well as a desired goal to work in healthcare.

Thankfully, with Augie’s accelerated curriculum and supportive staff, I was able to declare a double major in both psychology and pre-medicine with a minor in art.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

I am so thankful for all of Augustana’s staff—professors, advisors and support staff. I would not be where I am today without them. Everyone in the “Augie Bubble” has guided me in accomplishing both academic and personal goals throughout these past four years. I am so grateful for all of the wonderful experiences and opportunities that I have been given through supervised research, internships and study abroad programs.

I thank Dr. Corts, my psychology advisor and research mentor, for all of his support and encouragement. He has pushed me to go outside of my comfort zone by conducting my own research experiments and presenting my research at a national conference.

I also would like to thank Dr. Tallitsch, my anatomy and neuroanatomy professor, for believing in me and for taking a chance on me. With his support, encouragement and advice, I would not be where I am today.

Peak experience?

I have been blessed with so many wonderful opportunities throughout these past four years; however, my peak experience would be my summer internship through Vera French. All summer I worked alongside behavioral health counselors, created group activities, and planned two summer camps for children suffering from a traumatic loss.

Through that internship I was able to determine what I wanted to do with my life after I graduate from Augie, which is to be a psychiatric nurse practitioner.

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What surprised you?

I was truly surprised by how quickly I felt “at home” at Augustana. During my first week on campus, I discovered a great group of friends, became a part of a team and discovered my true self. I was not expecting to fit right in, find my voice and evolve as a Viking during the first week of school!

How did you use your Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice on a study abroad trip to Norway. We studied the welfare state, healthcare and education system of the Scandinavian country. We visited Haukeland University Hospital and the University of Tromso, saw the Northern Lights, and went dog sledding across an array of mountains.

What will you miss the most?

I will truly miss cheering on the football field, stunting on the basketball court, singing songs and dancing with my sorority, and eating walking tacos with my friends in the CC between classes. I will additionally miss attending events created by fellow student groups and OSL, walking the slough path on a beautiful sunny day, and the close relationships I have formed with my professors over the years. My time here at Augustana may have come to an end, but the memories will never fade away.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Never take anything for granted and enjoy every moment. Before you know it, it will all come to an end. You will be saying goodbye to all of your friends, teammates and professors. Don't forget to go to as many events as possible and always push yourself to try something new.