



Rebecca McNamar

High school: Quincy Senior High School

Hometown: Quincy, Ill.

Majors: Secondary education; biology

Minor: Theatre arts

Activities: Ipha Psi Omega theatre honor society, Augustana Concert Band, Club Ed, POST Scholar, Augustana theatre (stage manager)

Internship: Student teaching at Rock Island High School

Post-grad plans: Teaching science at United Township High School in East Moline, Ill.

“Rebecca has blessed us with her unwavering service to the theatre department. It has been such an honor to watch her blossom into such an amazing woman. She is a STEM education major with a theatre minor and has been a spectacular stage manager and theatre artist for us! Not many other schools would have allowed Rebecca to flourish like she has here, and honestly, not many students would have been as dedicated as Becca.”

— Shelley Cooper, assistant professor,
theatre arts

Why Augustana?

I chose Augustana because out of all the college campuses I visited, it was where I could see myself the most. It also had the education program that I was looking for and would make me very hireable post-graduation.

Augustana allowed me the chance to participate in everything I wanted outside of my major, which was something I was looking for. I still got to be a part of band and theatre even though I wasn't a major, and that was important to me.

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

I'm further than I thought I would be. I've done so much in a short amount of time, it's almost unreal. My freshman self would never have expected this, but she would be proud and excited. I'm about to finish student teaching, and I've already accepted an offer from a school. I'm so close to having what I've been reaching for so long.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

There are a lot of people who helped me get to where I am — for the most part, it was my professors and advisors. There is something different about the professors I've had at Augustana. They all care so much about their students and take a personal interest in the people they work with. There are professors that I haven't had since my freshman year who will still say hello to me.

My theatre professors and directors are some of the biggest supports I've had. They were constantly cheering me on and pushing me in what I could do. Some of the professors in the science departments I had for one class, and I will still go into their offices and talk to them about what's going on. All of them wanted to know what was happening in my life and how my job search was going. They are so excited for me to be a teacher.

My advisors were the biggest help. They helped with the classes I needed to take.

Also the friends I made on campus are the biggest supports in my life.

Peak experience?

As cheesy as this sounds, it was student teaching. Being able to do a short version of the job I'm going to do for the rest of my life was so affirming in the choice that I made. Working with the students is something I'll be forever grateful for and an experience I'll never forget. I loved every minute of it, and even on the hard days, the classroom was where I wanted to be.

At the same time, I was still a student and had the support of Augie and my fellow student teachers.

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2022

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

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What surprised you?

My roommates. I went random and was assigned a triple. We thought we weren't going to like each other, but I ended up rooming with one of them every year since. My other freshman roommate and I are very close, and we spend time with each other every weekend. They also brought me my other close friends. You will find your friends in the places you least expect.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used it to help pay for expenses during student teaching as I didn't have an income during that time.

What will you miss the most?

The people. Some of my favorite people in the world I met at this place. They are people I hang out with, people I talk to in class, my confidants, my support systems. You go to Augustana because of the academics and the opportunities, but you stay for the people. I going to miss so many people that I met here.

Advice for the Class of 2026?

Get your Gen Eds and PE credits out of the way as soon as you can. Also don't be afraid to be yourself. You will find your people, and they will be just as weird as you.

Finally, try even if you might fail. The thing is you tried.