



Spencer Napiwocki

High school: Plainfield East High School

Hometown: Bolingbrook, Ill.

Major: Geology

Minor: Geographic information science and technology (GIST)

Activities: Augustana Concert Band, Udden Club

Internships: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Post-grad plans: Work.

“Earth’s complex combination of systems and processes requires a deep understanding of geology and geochemistry to tackle societal issues and fundamental scientific questions. Spencer embraced his interest in geology and geochemistry to analyze a fundamental question about the formation of the island of Trinidad, and dove deeply into the subject by employing not just one, but multiple analytical techniques and modeling strategies to explore this question. The geology department can’t wait to see where Spencer’s scientific explorations will lead him next!”
— Dr. Michael Wolf, professor and chair, geology

Why Augustana?

At first, I was a bit nervous to go to a small liberal arts college, when I had mostly been visiting big state universities. But, after coming here for a visit and getting a very personal tour of the campus and the academic buildings, I knew this was the school for me.

I loved the feel of the college, and the personal interactions I had with students and faculty made me feel like my individuality was both encouraged and desired.

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

I had no idea how many opportunities would present themselves to me when I first came to Augie. As a part of the geology department, I have been able to go on so many wonderful trips all across the country, and even to the Caribbean.

Additionally, I have been able to have an internship with the Army Corps for more than two years, which has been an amazing opportunity to gain lots of skills and experiences.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

The faculty that I have interacted with, and largely the geology department as a whole, have been huge factors in the opportunities and experiences I have gained throughout my four years.

The faculty look for hard-working and passionate students and, from my experience, will give you tons of their time and help you with any opportunities that you pursue.

Peak experience?

My favorite experience was being a paid intern for the Geology 105 field course. It’s a class I took as an incoming freshman that started my passion for geology. I went back as a rising senior and worked with the professors to share the passion I gained on my trip and hopefully pass it on to the incoming students on this trip.

On top of that, you spend the two weeks camping in the Rocky Mountains, which are beautiful.

What surprised you?

I have mentioned it before, but I was surprised so much by the opportunities that I was given. Not just the opportunities, but the in-depth education, the cool people and the important relationships that I have fostered.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to travel abroad during my junior year J-term and take a geology class in Bonaire. It was so much fun to travel internationally for a school course, and getting to attend class on the beach is the best.

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2022

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

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What will you miss the most?

I will miss the people and relationships that I have built here at Augie. I truly feel that the last four years have led to huge personal growth, and the people I have met here have shaped me into the better person I am today. I will sadly miss the community that is Augustana, but I am excited to step into the future.

Advice for the Class of 2026?

Take this opportunity to meet and learn from as many people as possible. College is not just about learning in the academic sense — though that is important, it is also an amazing opportunity to learn about yourself and who you are.