



## Alyssa Froehling

**Majors:** English and creative writing

**Minor:** Women's & gender studies

**Activities:** SAGA Art & Literary Magazine, Student Government Association, Electric Theatre Unplugged, Zeta Phi Kappa sorority, Omicron Delta Kappa honor society, Phi Beta Kappa

**Internships:** Editor-in-chief, SAGA; Communications Department at Loyola Academy, a high school in Wilmette, Ill.; photo editor at LCP360 in Des Plaines, Ill.

**Post-grad plans:** I've applied to many copyediting and content managing positions around the Chicago-land area. I hope to save up for a year, a few years if need be, so that I'll have enough to attend my graduate school of choice, Sarah Lawrence College (SLC). Though I've learned that many goals in life don't go as planned, I want to eventually get my MFA in poetry, whether that be at SLC or somewhere else, and then possibly go for a Ph.D. in English. The end goal is to teach poetry at the collegiate level.

"Alyssa Froehling has it all: talent, reliability and a winning personality. Her stories and poems blow me away, her insights into other students' work often surpass my own, and the steady way she runs the Byzantine bureaucracy of our campus literary magazine helps me sleep at night. I trust her. Moreover, she never fails to brighten my day by her mere presence in class and on campus. She has a bright future ahead of her. I look forward to following it in the years to come."

— Dr. Kelly Daniels, associate professor, English

## MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2017

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

### Why Augustana?

Augustana was one of the few colleges I looked at which had creative writing as a separate major, rather than just a focus under the English major. And as a creative writer, a small school was appealing to me, as it meant more one-on-one time with professors and more intimate classroom/workshop settings.

### Are you where you thought you'd be four years ago?

I'm sure this is a common response, but no, not at all. I was one of the few students who knew what majors they wanted from day one of college and stuck with them all four years—but when it comes to what groups I ended up involved in, the friends I have, my own personal growth and world views—those all changed drastically from when I set foot on this campus my freshman year.

### Who helped you get to where you are now?

Without Professor Rebecca Wee, I wouldn't have found my love for poetry, and likely wouldn't believe I was good enough to pursue it further. And whether it be meeting with her to talk about my writing or what is going on in my life, she has made an impact on my life I can't articulate. When I felt loss or hopelessness I thought I couldn't bear, she reminded me that it's okay for everything not to be okay: circumstances may never be completely 'okay,' but they will be different. And that will be enough.

Dr. Daniel Morris in the religion department also introduced me to two authors who quickly became my favorite when it came to studying faith—Kelly Brown Douglas and Dale Martin. He challenged me to become a better writer and thinker, both academically and personally, and examine points of view I never would have stumbled upon by myself.

Every time I felt I lost my way, these two professors kept popping up in my life with words of wisdom and open ears.

### A peak experience?

A peak experience was studying abroad in India. This trip was all about community—and what activism can do for a community. I found that throughout the trip, the other Augustana students and I formed a community that listened to one another's needs and helped each other out emotionally and intellectually. I wasn't expecting such a strong sense of belonging and support in just two weeks.

### What surprised you?

By joining Electric Theatre Unplugged my junior year, I learned to claim my identity—I have never seen myself as a performer, and for a long while was unable to perform in front of a group of people without my voice shaking. But because I chose to try out, I found an artistic community and support system, and an irreplaceable source of catharsis and healing through art. I learned that my vulnerable, emotional and honest nature isn't a bad or weak trait.

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### How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to go to India over spring break 2017. Studying abroad in India with Dr. Al-Wazedi and Dr. Popple gave me the chance to travel across the world while remaining mindful of effects of tourism, consumerism and colonialism, and challenged me to wrestle with the ethics of all of those concepts.

Having never been out of the country before, this program gave me the chance to learn during experiences far out of my comfort zone while also being cognizant and respectful of the culture around me. I learned more about activism through the grassroots organizations we visited—one must listen to the needs of a community, understand a community and build a relationship with a community in order for change to be made and any good to be done.

We can never assume we know what's best for anyone until we've established a true connection.

### What will you miss the most?

I will miss the creative and supportive groups on campus I've been fortunate enough to find. My friends from ETU, SAGA, Zeta, sitting in Dr. Daniels and Professor Wee's workshop classes, sitting outside to free write. All of these experiences have nurtured my writing, or kept me believing in myself when I felt I couldn't or didn't want to, or helped me to become a better activist and person. I know there will be more outlets in the future, but none quite like the communities and people I've met here. I'll always remember them.

### Advice for the Class of 2021?

This is going to sound cliché, and as every poet knows, you should avoid clichés at all costs—but this rings true, especially on a small campus such as Augustana.

If someone wants to be in your life, they will make time for you. Don't waste your time hanging on to people who don't recognize your worth. At the same time, try to take loss in stride. Deep connections with others are far and few between, and their memory should be respected and cherished, even if at the same time you need the courage to turn away from them.

You have worth because you exist, and you will inevitably impact other people. As inevitable as this is, the fact your life probably won't go exactly as you envision it, so like people, don't cling to plans or dreams that fall through. Mourn them and keep going. You are enough.

Also, being alone doesn't make you a loser, and doesn't necessarily have to translate to loneliness. We cannot possibly know how to avoid hurting others or hurting ourselves if we do not intimately get to know our own hurt.