



Brenna Whisler

Majors: Public health and communication studies

Activities: Phi Beta Kappa, varsity cross country, varsity track & field, Sigma Pi Delta sorority, Harry Potter Alliance

Internships: Texas Medical Center internship at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Scott County (Iowa) Health Department with the Live. Lead. Free. program

Post-grad plans: Move to Nairobi, Kenya, and live with my dad and step-mom for four months while working at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). After I return, I will join the AmeriCorps VISTA program.

“As a communication studies major, Brenna has shown her ability to speak and act with conviction both inside and outside the classroom on issues that matter to her. At the same time, she takes time to investigate the many and multiple perspectives on those issues, showing her ability to listen and reflect rather than judge. Brenna is a prime example of a student who has not only taken advantage of the opportunities to develop her mind, body and spirit, but also created her own opportunities as well. Her intelligence, diligence and kindness will be an asset to her and others on her path forward.”

— Dr. Meg Kunde, assistant professor,
communication studies

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2017

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

My mom, aunt and uncle attended Augustana. I stepped on campus, and I knew that Augustana was the school for me because of the friendly atmosphere and community.

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

I am definitely not where I thought I'd be. I came into Augie with the goal of becoming a high school English teacher. Throughout my first year, I switched my majors seven times and wanted to be everything from an event planner to a journalist. Eventually, I took a couple classes in the communication studies department and loved everything about the classes, especially the professors! From there, I stumbled across a couple public health classes and added that.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

I've worked in the Admissions Office since my freshman year, and everyone in the office helped me become who I am today. I was provided with more than one leadership opportunity, and I was always surrounded by mentors who were willing to help teach me how to be a leader. Additionally, my teammates have been the best support system I ever could have asked for and have always encouraged me to be the best version of myself.

A peak experience?

One of my peak experiences here was the opportunity to work with the Scott County Health Department for my Senior Inquiry. It was an awesome way for me to apply everything I had learned over the past three years in both the communication studies and public health departments. The best part of this experience was presenting to my SI professor and site supervisors at the health department and hearing all of their positive feedback. After interning at the health department, I feel like I'm better prepared to be successful in the public health field.

What surprised you?

Well, I'm originally from Bettendorf, Iowa (about 20 minutes from Augie), and I came in as a freshman with no desire to ever leave the Quad Cities. Over the past four years, I've learned how valuable traveling is and how much I enjoy it. I think it's amazing how much a person can learn by immersing themselves in a different culture with different people.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to spend a summer in Houston working at Baylor College of Medicine. This was another one of my peak experiences. I went to Houston with about 10 other students, and we spent the summer completing full-time research internships. I learned so much and made so many connections; it was an amazing experience!

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What will you miss the most?

I've been on a team for 10 years straight now, and I'm really going to miss having a built-in support system. I've made my best friends at Augie, and they've pushed me intellectually and athletically to be the best I can be. I'm also going to miss the community atmosphere on Augie's campus. It's so nice to walk to class and see countless people you know and countless people you don't know who still smile at you.

Advice for the Class of 2021?

Meet as many people and make as many connections as you can. Every person, no matter what class, race, gender, etc., that you meet will know something and have a different perspective than you. So take the time to get to know them and learn something new! Enjoy your time at Augie...it goes quick!