



Courtney Baker

High school: William Fremd High School

Hometown: Palatine, Ill.

Majors: Communication sciences and disorders, Spanish for professional use

Minor: Aging studies

Activities: Augustana National Alliance on Mental Illness (Augie NAMI); Augustana Student Speech-Language and Hearing Association; Omicron Kappa Delta; Mortar Board; Augustana Center for Speech, Language, and Hearing; Spanish tutor

Internships: Job coach coordinator for Barrington Summer Employment Transitions/ Hidden Talents Program (summer 2018); experiential intern at Center for Active Seniors in Davenport, Iowa (summer 2019); student-faculty research partnership (summer 2019)

Post-grad plans: Attend Northwestern University for a doctorate in audiology

“Courtney has made such a positive impact at Augie. From founding Augie’s NAMI group, pursuing a double major in CSD and Spanish with an aging studies minor, to presenting to 150 students at Symposium Day on the ‘Meaning of Life,’ she exemplifies what excellence means in a liberal arts education. My favorite memory of Courtney is traveling with her to Arizona to present our research on a national stage. Congratulations, Courtney! You are bound for great things.”

— Dr. Ann Perreau, associate professor, CSD, and Audiology Clinic coordinator

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

The first time I saw Augie, it was the middle of January right after a snowstorm. My tour guide continued to emphasize that in spring it’s so much nicer, and all I could think was ‘this was the most beautiful place I had ever seen.’ I met with the CSD department during that visit and after one meeting with them, I could tell I had found my new home. I immediately knew I wanted to attend Augie. Everyone was so welcoming, and it truly felt like the whole campus was one big family from day one.

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

When I stepped foot on campus four years ago, I thought I would be attending graduate school for speech-language pathology after graduating from Augie. Although still finishing in the same two majors that I originally chose, I switched my focus to audiology my sophomore year. I definitely would not have imagined I would be leaving Augie with having created my own club, as president of two clubs, and on my way to Northwestern for a doctorate.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

So many people have helped me get me to where I am now. It really started with the first faculty member that I met on campus, Farah Marklevits, and continued on to my Senior Inquiry research advisor Dr. Ann Perreau. Everyone I met at Augustana encouraged and supported me throughout my four years.

The people who have helped me most are the faculty advisors and department chairs within my two majors. Dr. Ana Bordería-García in the Spanish department has been my advisor since the start. She has helped me feel more confident in my language skills and is always around to sit and chat.

My advisor Dr. Perreau in CSD really took me under her wing and taught me everything I know about audiology and inspired me to pursue a degree in the field. She also provided me with valuable research experience in audiology that helped me receive acceptance into a top graduate program.

Peak experience?

During my senior year, I attended the American Auditory Association’s annual conference in Scottsdale, Ariz., for four days with my CSD research advisor, Dr. Ann Perreau. I was chosen to present research on Meaning of Life Measures for audiology patients that Dr. Perreau and I had collaborated on through a student-faculty research partnership. Without funding for the internship and travel expenses from Augie, I would have not been able to go.

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What surprised you?

What surprised me the most is how many activities there are to be involved in. There truly is something for everyone, and if there isn't anything that interests you, create a new club. It's amazing how many new friends you can meet through sharing a common interest.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice during the summer of 2019 to travel to Cuenca, Ecuador, with the Summer in the Andes program for five weeks. There was a group of about 20 of us, and we traveled the country for a week and a half and then attended classes in Cuenca the rest of the time.

What will you miss the most?

I will miss the feeling of being a part of a big family at Augustana. In the CSD Department, all the students and faculty are close to each other. It's going to be weird not being around that group of people every day after three years together. I will also miss the club I created (Augie NAMI). I will miss our NAMI family where everyone was welcome to join and talk or just be supported by other students who feel the same stressors as them.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

My best advice is to know that you are loved and cared about on our campus. The faculty and staff all want you to succeed and feel safe. It's ok to struggle. College is hard, but know there are people on campus who are there for you. You can always turn to your professors or friends.