



Peter Alfano

High school: Knoxville High School

Hometown: Knoxville Ill.

Majors: Biology, theatre arts

Activities: The Order of the Phoenix, Alpha Psi Omega national theatre honor society, Delta Omega Nu fraternity

Internships: OSF St. Mary's Medical Center

Post-grad plans: Medical school, hopefully through the Rural Medical Education (RMED) Program

“Peter truly exemplifies the Augie spirit—from his liberal arts approach to his majors (pre-med and theatre!) to his kind and welcoming leadership style. He started out as a kind, quiet first-year as an assistant stage manager for my mainstage production of Crimes of the Heart. Since then, he has proven himself to be one of our strongest actors and one of our strongest leaders, serving as president of Alpha Psi Omega this year. His positive impact on us and our students will be felt for years, and we can't wait to see where he goes from here!”

— Dr. Jennifer Popple, assistant professor, theatre arts

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I heard great things about Augie. Its pre-medicine program seemed like one of the best. Also, the student-to-teacher ratio is exactly what I thought would be best for my academic learning. For some reason, Augie was the only campus I visited, even though I applied to many more colleges. Once I saw the campus and felt the positivity, I knew Augie was for me.

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

Not really. My plan was to focus only on my studies in science. I saw the opportunity to receive a theatre scholarship, and I was awarded it. From there I fell in love with theatre even more than I already was. The professors, students and department in general were so welcoming, and it did not take long to understand I was becoming part of a family. I ended up majoring in theatre as well, and it was one of the best decisions I made at Augustana.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

I have had many role models since freshman year. The upperclassman in the theatre department who took me under their wing (Keenan Odenkirk, Joe Olinger and MJ Mason), and certain professors in both the theatre department (Dr. Popple, Jeff Coussens, Jackie McCall, Shelley Cooper and Christina Myatt) and science departments (Dr. Medina, Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Gehler and many more).

I also have to thank so many of my peers who helped me with everything from assignments to getting me through the tough times of college and life. There are too many in this list to name everyone, but James Wheeler, Jack Harris, Nic Cervantez, of course the three that I mentioned earlier, and everyone in my fraternity The Order of the Phoenix. These people have impacted me more than I could have imagined, and I could never thank them enough.

Finally, of course, my family. They helped me get to college and helped motivate me to put my head down and move forward when I faced hard times. Thank you to everyone.

Peak experience?

This is tough because I have so many amazing experiences, but the best was probably pledging Phoenix. It is a small, not very well-known group on campus, but the group made me into the leader I am today. Not only is it filled with some of the most committed, caring and inspirational people, but I have learned so much! The pledging process is one that I cherish and wish everyone could go through. I will always hold this group close to my heart and the people in it closer.

What surprised you?

Meeting as many amazing people as I did. I did not expect make a connection with so many people. I hope to keep these friendships and bonds for the rest of my life. Both peers and professors, I feel like I could never repay them. Also, I did not expect to lead as many groups as I did.

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How did you use Augie Choice?

I used it to study abroad in Austria for a physical theatre training workshop—one of the best experiences I have ever had. I was lucky enough to go with some of my best friends and a professor who really cares. It was an experience I was very lucky to have.

What will you miss the most?

The memories that I would make every day. Some are better than others, but the memories made at Augustana are some that stay with you forever. I will miss seeing some of the smartest people I will ever meet every day, and I will miss seeing the same faces that I would get to see. Every day I felt like I had more to learn because of the unending guidance I received from everyone.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Join as many groups as you can. You can always leave them if you don't like them. However, I think it is the best way to find "your group." College becomes a lot easier when you find your perfect friend group to support you.