



Eric Tabaka

High school: Monroe High School

Hometown: Monroe, Wis.

Major: Music education

Minor: History

Activities: Augustana Symphonic Band, Delta Omega Nu fraternity, Campus Ministries, NAFME, Phi Mu Alpha music fraternity, Ascension Ringers, Emerge Leadership Program, Order of Omega

Internships: I completed my student teaching at United Township High School in East Moline, Ill., and Herbert Hoover Elementary School in Bettendorf, Iowa.

Post-grad plans: I will be teaching K-8 general music and vocal music in the Vinton-Shellsburg school district in Vinton, Iowa.

“Eric has excelled in multiple areas during his time at Augustana. All of his musical, leadership and volunteer opportunities have developed a great skill set as he begins a teaching career and inspires future generations of potential Vikings. Eric’s limitless potential has been fostered by a supportive community and a level of maturity combined with an impressive work ethic. I am excited to see where his next steps guide him.”

— Dr. Dawn Farmer, assistant professor,
music education

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

My parents are both alumni of Augustana so I grew up coming to campus for Homecomings and class reunions. During my college search process, the close-knit community I observed and experienced with both students and professors was unparalleled to other schools I was considering. The opportunity to play with the Symphonic Band and have a conversation with the director afterwards during one visit showed me how much the faculty care about their students, both inside and outside the classroom.

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

In most ways, no. I became involved in many more organizations than I anticipated, and have held a leadership role in nearly all of them. I never expected to have the opportunity to travel abroad three times in my four years, nor to be in the top band all four years. All these experiences have shaped me into a more well-rounded person and stronger leader, which will serve me well in my future.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

There are so many individuals and groups that have supported me. I want to specifically acknowledge three members of the music faculty: Dr. Lambrecht, Dr. Keehn and Dr. Farmer. They have pushed me to continue to develop my trade as a musician and as an educator, but most importantly, as a good citizen and person. My cooperating teachers during student teaching, Mr. Wawrzynski and Mrs. Pratt, both helped me grow and develop as an educator and showed me how to balance work with the rest of life. My family, fraternity brothers, bandmates and fellow education students have provided constant support to me throughout my four years. They have been there for my at my best and at my worst, and have consistently challenged me to be the best version of myself.

Peak experience?

One of my most memorable experiences would be traveling to Jamaica with the education department to learn about the country and teach at a school in Kingston. This trip opened my eyes to music and education of different countries, and allowed me to build connections with my peers and the people we met while abroad. We even met Usain Bolt when we were visiting a beach one day, which was crazy. I shook his hand, and he said I have a good grip, and I’ll never forget that moment.

What surprised you?

It surprised me how busy Augustana students choose to make themselves—it seems everyone has multiple majors or minors and is involved in a plethora of extra-curriculars. However, everyone is able to find value and success in their studies and organizations, and are more adequately prepared for the world after graduation because of these experiences and their work ethic.

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How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice for my trip to Jamaica. This money covered almost the whole trip and provided me with a travel opportunity I otherwise might not have had after my other two trips through school to Spain and Japan.

What will you miss the most?

I will miss the Augustana community as a whole, specifically those close friendships I have developed. There is always a friendly face anywhere on campus, whether it's a fraternity brother, professor or coworker. I know these friendships will continue to be fostered after my time at Augustana, but I'll miss being able to physically spend time with fellow students and professors I have gotten to know.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Surround yourself with those who genuinely care about you and your success. Whether academically, socially or professionally, strong support is essential for success, so seek those people out. They will be in your life long after graduation, so begin building personal connections early and often.