



Gage Meyers

Majors: Political science (pre-law) and Asian studies

Minor: Japanese

Activities: Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia music fraternity, WAUG, Politics Club, Model United Nations, Fencing Club, Philosophy Club, SAGA

Internships: Office of Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (fall 2016), Prairie State Legal Services (spring 2017)

Post-grad plans: Attend law school in the fall

“Gage came to Augustana with his mind set on the pre-law program. Now, not only is he on the right track to top law schools, but he finished political science and Asian studies majors with distinction, traveled twice to Japan—once as an exchange student and as a researcher the second time—and participated in Model United Nations both in the U.S. and Japan. Gage is truly a stellar case of a student who kept expanding his potential by embracing the diverse opportunities offered by Augustana.”

— Dr. Xiaowen Zhang, associate professor,
political science

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2017

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

When I was applying to college, I received many letters. Each letter felt scripted, making me feel like I was only a number. The letter from Augustana had a gold seal on the back, and the letter addressed me as person, engaging with me. This is what initially got me interested in Augustana. After speaking with Courtney Wallace in admissions, I was convinced to visit Augustana, and I immediately fell in love with the campus. It was a place where I could see myself spending the next four years of my life.

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

I am exactly where I thought I'd be. Since I first applied to Augustana, I knew what I wanted to do: law. I took my first political science course in the fall of my freshman year with Dr. Magalhães and just kept going from there. Despite my end goal remaining the same, I certainly did not expect the twists and turns in the path it took to get here.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

My mother has been vital to get me to where I am today. We have been through the worst parts of our lives together and, as a single parent, she is a pinnacle of strength and determination. She has been my biggest cheerleader, my inspiration and my friend.

It would be remiss of me not to thank the professors who have guided me to this point. The political science professors, especially my advisors Dr. David Dehnel and Dr. Xiaowen Zhang, have been my mentors throughout my four years. My time with them, both in and out of the classroom, has instilled in me the knowledge and skills that are essential for my future goals.

Last and certainly not least, Dr. Mari Nagase from Asian studies has been the biggest factor in my cultural growth and understanding. Constantly encouraging students to go outside their comfort zone and study abroad, Dr. Nagase has been the sole reason for me going to Japan not once, but twice. Dr. Nagase's Japanese courses were challenging and enjoyable, and if it wasn't for her, I would never have considered continuing with the Japanese program and taking on my Asian studies major.

A peak experience?

During my sophomore year, I was part of a research team with five other students, led by Dr. Nagase and Dr. Anne Ericson, to investigate Hitachi Construction Machinery in Japan. As part of our research grant, we investigated key sites in Japan. For three weeks, we traveled to Tokyo, Kyoto, Kobe and Osaka, visiting temples, exploring each city and even visiting a hot spring. This excursion was my first outside the United States, and just taking in such a vastly different culture was extraordinary. It was also the first time I used my Japanese outside the classroom. Being able to have a conversation with native speakers filled me with pride. Looking back at the experience now...it still feels like a dream.

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What surprised you?

At Augie, I learned that I am constantly changing and evolving. The person I am now is radically different from the Gage Meyers who moved into Westerlin 108 four years ago. My ideals and personality have been shaped by the wonderful people whom I have been blessed to meet at Augustana. I have realized that every day is the chance to become a better person, and opportunities to do so are the greatest gift we have.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to help fund an internship at the Office of Congresswoman Cheri Bustos, and it was an eye-opening experience. Being a part of Congresswoman Bustos' re-election campaign was invaluable, especially when the presidential election was going on at the same time. Seeing the dedication of fellow citizens, volunteering their time for someone they believe in was inspiring.

What will you miss the most?

Aside from the people, I will miss the beauty of the campus in winter. My favorite thing to do was to walk the slough path at night and sit at a particular bench. There, I could see a single light from across the slough, where the trees all seemed to be curling toward that light, as if reaching out to it. I remember sitting there for over an hour just taking it all in and watching the snow fall.

Advice for the Class of 2021?

Never fall into a routine; shake things up! If anything, be crazy. Go with your friends at 2 a.m. to Steak 'n Shake or drive all the way to Iowa City to eat dinner. You will have the greatest experiences, not to mention the best stories, that way.