



Guadalupe Gallegos

Majors: Biology and Spanish for professional use

Minor: Latin American studies

Activities: Varsity track & field, Latinx Unidos, Gender and Sexuality Alliance, Sierra Club, Augustana Symphony Orchestra (one year)

Post-graduate plans: I am taking a gap year, and I have applied for internships that relate mostly to biology. For this summer, I was offered research space with a professor at Joliet Junior College after I presented some of my Senior Inquiry research to one of his classes. The research I will be doing involves the “three sisters” agricultural system and how it could increase crop yield and biodiversity. After my internships, I will consider going to graduate school. I also want to obtain a translator’s license for Spanish to see if I can connect Spanish, Latin America or any Spanish-speaking communities in the United States with a future profession in biology.

“Guadalupe’s story is a shining example of what students can accomplish if they keep an open mind. She came to Augustana with the goal of practicing veterinary medicine, but during her sophomore year, she realized that being a vet wasn’t for her. Despite the immediacy of her vocational crisis, Guadalupe stayed calm and reflected on her interests. Within months, she had discovered a passion for botany and conservation that she further developed working at the Orland Grassland south of Chicago. In the following years, Guadalupe learned about the biological, cultural and practical challenges facing botanical conservation. Now, as she graduates with degrees in biology and Spanish for professional use, she is ready to translate her passion into real environmental change, and we will all be better for it.”
— Dr. Tim Muir, associate professor, biology

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2017

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I really enjoyed the campus, not only for its beauty, but also for being a sort of center for great things to explore or do that are only a short walk, bus ride or drive from campus. Augustana is also a small, liberal arts-based college, which is what I wanted. I did not want to be lost among too many people, and I wanted a place where I could explore most of the things that interested me through taking different courses.

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

No, I feel that I have often taken steps forward as well as backward in order to be ready to graduate now. When I came here, I thought that I would be a biology (pre-vet) major and see what else I had to do in order to prepare for vet school... and then just take other classes that interested me whenever I could. Instead, I realized I would rather not be a vet. I could still do things with animals or wildlife that did not require being a vet, and some of the non-biology classes I took really interested me enough to get either another major or minor.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

Dr. Jason Koontz, Dr. Araceli Masterson and Dr. Tim Muir. I worked with Dr. Koontz in many classes, including my SI project, and I feel that he really helped me to think about how to explore connections between my majors and minor. Araceli Masterson has pushed me to do what I don’t always think I can. I have her to thank for getting me to study abroad in Ecuador and to complete the Spanish for professional use major instead of just going for a Spanish minor.

Finally, Professor Muir has been my advisor almost all four years. Even though I broke it to him that I no longer wanted to be a veterinarian, he stuck with me and helped me explore options for classes and things I can do after I graduate. All of them have greatly helped me to be the person I have become.

A peak experience?

Studying abroad in Ecuador was my peak experience. It was great to explore another country while still having some sort of direction of what was important to learn. I liked that we also were free to explore on our own because it made us wonder more, ask about things, and help us to answer our own questions.

What surprised you?

I learned how to question and really analyze my beliefs. While the classes here at Augie aren’t necessarily meant to sway your opinions one way over another, they do provide a safe, relatively judgment-free environment to reflect and re-evaluate personal values. I’ve found that over the past four years my beliefs have changed quite a bit and that they are stronger than ever.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to help pay for study abroad in Ecuador.

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What will you miss the most?

The students and professors that I gotten to know.

Advice for the Class of 2021?

Be open to new opinions, experiences and classes that might challenge the way that you think about a subject because there is always something new to learn.