



## Katie Aquadro

**Major:** Elementary education

**Activities:** Zeta Phi Kappa sorority, math tutor

**Internship:** I worked on the Number Sense Project with kindergarten students at Longfellow Liberal Arts School during the 2015-2016 school year.

**Post-grad plans:** Start teaching!

“I have truly enjoyed working with Katie as a student, peer mentor for two years, and intern in the Kindergarten Number Sense Project. To top it off, I got to supervise her student teaching in a first-grade classroom. It was really cool to see Katie interact so joyously with her first-grade students. Katie’s interactions with others have always stood out and served to encourage their contributions. I look forward to hearing about her work as a classroom teacher next year. Katie, thank you for coming to Augie!”

— Dr. H. Randall Hengst, professor and chair, education

## MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2017

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

### Why Augustana?

I knew that I wanted to be a teacher. I met with several teaching professionals, and they all spoke very highly of our education program here at Augie. I loved the small campus feel, and the scenery is beautiful. The Quad Cities provides a very rich environment for a degree in education. I couldn’t have chosen a better school.

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

I am so much further than I thought I would be. I learned so much more than how to be a teacher. I got a well-rounded education, and I found the people who will be my friends for life.

### Who helped you get to where you are now?

The first person who needs to be thanked is my advisor, Dr. Hengst. I have told many people my life would not be in order were it not for Randy. He kept me on track for graduation and assured me I was in the right major when I was stressed. I also gained tremendous leadership experience by serving as his peer mentor for two years. He supervised my student teaching, and I am 100% certain I would not be the person or the teacher I am today were it not for Randy. The rest of the education faculty also provided a great deal of information and inspiration and helped me become the teacher I am now.

Additionally, I need to thank the teachers at several schools who have welcomed me into their classroom and helped me develop my teaching style. I will never be able to thank Mrs. Smart enough for agreeing to let me student teach in her class and giving me the best 12 weeks of my time at Augie. Finally, my parents played a tremendous role in getting me to where I am. I couldn’t ask for a better support system.

### A peak experience?

My peak experience was definitely student teaching. My first three years here all led up to these 12 weeks. I spent fall term with 25 first-graders and loved every second. In all honesty, I cried on my last day. To know that I was helping these kids and seeing the progress they made over such a short time is so rewarding. I cannot wait to spend the rest of my life experiencing those feelings every day.

### What surprised you?

As much as I want to, I won’t know everything. Even 6-year-olds have astounding insights, and I can never stop learning from them. I also learned that I am 100% in the right major, and that I need to trust myself in knowing what is best for my students.

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## How did you use Augie Choice?

I spent spring break of my junior year at the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind with Dr. Deb Bracke and five other Augustana students. We shadowed and observed the teachers there and spent time with the students. We then presented at the Council for Exceptional Children conference, which was a huge honor because we were undergraduate students and we were not majoring in special education. We then were asked to write an article about what it was like to present at a national conference as undergrads. This article was later published in "Visual Impairment and Deafblind Education Quarterly."

## What will you miss the most?

I will miss a lot about Augustana! I will miss my sisters in the Zeta Phi Kappa sorority. I will miss my fellow elementary ed majors as well as the education faculty. I will also miss the Augie beauty, especially in the fall.

## Advice for the Class of 2021?

It sounds cliché, but your time here really will fly by. Before you know it, you'll be in my shoes—trying to figure out what exactly life after Augie entails. Try new things, meet new people. PLEASE USE YOUR AUGIE CHOICE! Love every minute of your time here. Do what you need to do to make this time yours.