



## Laura McNair

**Major:** Creative writing

**Minors:** Art, graphic design

**Activities:** HerCampus, Advertising Developers (ADs), Web Guild, Mortar Board, Sigma Pi Delta sorority, SAGA Literary Magazine

**Internships:** Completed two graphic design internships at Augustana's EDGE Center

“Laura found the EDGE Center, used it to discover new talents, and then developed her skills in a variety of areas. Not only learning skills in graphic design and building her writing portfolio in Her Campus, she also took advantage of what EDGE has to offer to grow her talents in strategic communication planning, project management and client communication. This combination of skills will make her a valuable asset to all organizations she is involved with in her future.”

— Doug Tschopp, director, Augustana's Entrepreneurial (EDGE) Center, and instructor, communication studies

## MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2019

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

### Why Augustana?

I decided I wanted to attend Augie when I came to campus for an overnight visit. At the time, I wanted to run competitively in college so I spent a majority of my time meeting the cross country and track team. I actually got an opportunity to practice with the team, and we ran a total of seven miles with a two-mile workout within.

At the end, we took a group photo to commemorate our efforts. As hard as the run was, I actually enjoyed running with everyone and realized I fit right in with the group. I liked that the team approached running seriously while finding ways to make the sport enjoyable for everyone. I'm sad to say I'm no longer a part of the cross country and track team, but I'm grateful for that experience because it gave me a glimpse of what the Augie community is like.

I also met with Margaret France about the creative writing program. At first, I felt tense because I expected some sort of formal meeting or interview with a professor. Those feelings went away as soon as Dr. France and I began talking. We had an in-depth conversation about writing, and she told me that writers can be anything they wanted to be. It gave me more confidence as a writer, and it occurred to me how caring the faculty is, and I respected that the professors actually looked out for students. I knew I'd academically strive at school with supportive professors like Margaret France.

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

Not at all. Coming in as a freshman, I wanted to pursue only writing. I also picked up art as a major, but I wasn't sure what I wanted to do with that. During my sophomore year, I started coming into the EDGE Center to learn Adobe software and complete graphic design projects. The EDGE Center is a student-run organization that provides design, event planning, video editing and marketing services.

Prior to this, I had some experience with digital illustration/painting along with intermediate knowledge of Photoshop. The more I visited EDGE, the more I realized my passion for graphic design. So I dropped my art major to a minor and added graphic design as a minor. That following summer, I completed my first graphic design internship at EDGE, and I realized I wanted to pursue a career in design.

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

One of my dearest friends, Comet Blecha, kept pushing me to come into the EDGE Center. She was heavily involved in EDGE as she held the position of project manager and lead designer. Over time, Comet became my mentor and gave me guidance on how to be a better designer. She never failed to challenge me as a designer, and if it weren't for her, I wouldn't have considered giving graphic design a shot.

I also have Doug Tschopp, the director of the EDGE Center, to thank. Doug looks after everyone in the office, and he helped me realize my potential by providing a space to explore my interests in a professional setting. Most importantly, he taught me that my graphic design skills are valuable and how to apply myself.

## Peak experience?

Writing for HerCampus became one of the highlights of my time at Augie. Not only did it provide a platform to raise my voice on current social justice issues, but it introduced me to many empowered individuals dedicated to making positive changes on campus. It is rewarding being a member of a group that seeks to empower others and educate the campus through a creative outlet. Being part of the organization when it was established on campus was exciting, and seeing it evolve over the past few years was tremendous.

## What surprised you?

I learned that I'm an experimental person; I like trying new things. There are several things I accomplished at Augie that I never imagined I would do. From joining Greek life to becoming a graphic designer, I learned how to embrace new challenges.

## How did you use Augie Choice?

I used it during one of my graphic design internships at EDGE.

## What will you miss the most?

I will miss being surrounded by people who empower me the most. Augie introduced me to many bright, insightful people, and I'm forever grateful for that. Coworkers, teammates, coaches, club members, professors, sisters—the list goes on.

## Advice for the Class of 2023?

Don't be afraid to take on any opportunity that comes your way because you never know how far it will take you. And surround yourself with people who want you to succeed.