



Alyssa Klahn

High school: Lincoln-Way Central High School

Hometown: New Lenox, Ill.

Majors: Physics, secondary education

Activities: Varsity softball, Phi Rho sorority, Active Minds

Internships: Student teacher at United Township High School, East Moline, Ill.

Post-grad plans: Physics teacher at Geneva High School in Geneva, Ill.

“Our nation is in desperate need of skilled and dedicated STEM teachers, so I’m thrilled at the prospect of Alyssa joining the faculty at Geneva High School next fall. I have no doubt that Alyssa will inspire her future students, as a teacher and as a coach—she’ll create an exciting classroom environment where young people are challenged to become scientists and to grow as thoughtful citizens! Alyssa is a shining example of all that a student-athlete can accomplish. All of us in the department are proud of her.”

— Dr. Mike Schroeder, professor, education

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I wanted a school where I could focus on my education while having the opportunity to continue my softball career. Originally I planned on majoring in engineering so I knew I needed a school where I could focus on academics, and being able to play softball was just a perk. I also knew I wanted a smaller college with smaller class sizes but still have that college campus feel.

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

Not at all. When deciding to major in physics and education, I was again unsure if this was the path I wanted to follow. Having to do clinical hours at local schools, student teaching for a whole semester, the edTPA [performance-based assessment aspiring teachers have to complete during student teaching to get their license]...it all scared me, and I did not think I would be able to successfully complete them and come out still enjoying my decision.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

The education department has helped me tremendously. I cannot thank the entire department enough on how much they have done for me throughout my four years here. Every single professor, advisor and faculty member has helped me in some way accomplish all I have. Whether I was in one of their classes or not at the time, I could drop into any of their offices at any time, and they were there to answer any and all of my questions. They truly cared for not only me, but every student in the program, and about helping all of us succeed no matter how much we thought we would not.

Peak experience?

My peak experience was student teaching my fall semester of my senior year. I was anxious at the beginning, nervous I would not succeed or realize teaching would not be the career I wanted to pursue. I was placed at a high school with such a welcoming faculty and great student body. As time went on, I began to enjoy going to teach more and more each day. When student teaching came to an end, I did not want to leave, and I definitely did not want to go back to being a student in the classroom myself.

What surprised you?

How involved I became. As a freshman, I expected to only be a part of the softball team. I never expected I would become a member of a sorority, serve as an executive board member of Active Minds, volunteer each year for Special Olympics, compete in multiple intramural sports, complete the Emerge Leadership program, and travel to Walt Disney World for a leadership trip.

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How did you use Augie Choice?

Every three years the softball team takes an international trip to compete and host a clinic. This past winter break we traveled to Brazil for 10 days. We spent time in Sao Paulo, Buzios and Rio de Janeiro, competing against Brazilian teams, hosting clinics for local players and of course sightseeing.

What will you miss the most?

Having all of my closest friends around me all the time. I have met the most amazing people here at Augustana, and it is so comforting knowing they are down the hall or just five minutes across campus from me when I need them or just want to hang out. I know I will keep these friendships after graduation but getting together is going to be a bit more difficult as we all go our separate ways, starting our new lives.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Don't be afraid to seek help when you need it and whatever you need it for. Whether that is through your friends, a teammate, a professor or a counselor. If you are struggling with school/grades, physically, mentally or emotionally, there is someone on this campus who cares and is going to help.