



## Alia McMurray

**High school:** Northside College Prep

**Hometown:** Chicago

**Majors:** Multimedia journalism and mass communication, French

**Activities:** Delta Chi Theta sorority, The Observer, Phi Beta Kappa

**Internships:** Biology and women's and gender studies

**Post-grad plans:** It's all up in the air right now with the pandemic!

“Alia is an exceptionally thoughtful, interesting and original student. Her focus on course material is intense and personal, and she can always be relied upon to contribute something new and insightful to class discussion. I will greatly miss her perceptive and nuanced voice in my classroom!”

— Dr. Taddy Kalas, professor, French

### MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

#### Why Augustana?

I chose Augustana because I wanted to go to a small school, where there was a great staff-to-student ratio and where the teachers really cared about their students. The campus was also so gorgeous.

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

I'm definitely not where I thought I'd be when I first came to campus! I came in wanting to go into a science field and major, and ended up studying multimedia journalism and French. I also never thought I was the “type” to join a sorority or participate in Greek life, but I ended up pledging Delta Chi Theta my freshman year.

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

There are so many people who helped me get to where I am now. Nobody can go through life alone, and the support I've gotten throughout my four years at Augustana has been incredible.

My advisors Dr. Yaschur and Dr. Kalas both really helped guide me within my majors and helped me whenever I was struggling or needed advice about which classes to take and what I wanted my future to look like. I had a lot of special teachers who I really just clicked with, and I loved to stop by their offices for a great conversation, like Dr. Cranford, Dr. Kosnick, Dr. Schwartz and Dr. Bloemer.

I had such a great support system of incredible close friends, and my Big and Little and my Greek family were also there to help me and make me smile on a daily basis.

#### Peak experience?

My peak experience was going to Holden Village with a group of Augie students during J-term. I never realized it was possible to become so close with a small group in such a short amount of time, but in Holden Village, our group became a real family. The memories that we all made there together are some of my fondest and will stay with me for the rest of my life. The teachers who accompanied us on our trip were also so amazing, and I wouldn't have met them without this trip.

#### What surprised you?

I was surprised by how deep all of the connections I made at Augustana were. I never imagined that teachers could actually care so much about their students. I never expected to feel so valued and like I really had a voice within an educational institution. The connections I was able to make were so much deeper than I thought was possible.

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## How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to travel to Holden village for J-term. It was the greatest trip of my life, and I would recommend it to anyone. I had the best experiences with the class we took there, as well as the totally immersive cultural experience of going to a new place.

## What will you miss the most?

I will miss the connections I made the most—to my teachers, my friends, my Greek family, the Augie staff. I will miss certain routines and spots on campus that were my go-to places to grab a coffee and have a study session. I will miss popping into a favorite teacher's office just to have a chat about life. I will miss getting to see all of these amazing people so frequently during my week because they never failed to bring a smile to my face.

## Advice for the Class of 2024?

Try everything! My freshman year I joined everything that sounded even mildly interesting, and eventually I had to pare things down and choose what I really valued. But at the beginning, explore all of the amazing opportunities available to you!