



Rebecca Achilli

High school: Auburn High School

Hometown: Rockford, Ill.

Majors: Geography, anthropology

Minor: Music

Activities: Concert Band, Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA)

Post-grad plans: Because COVID-19 has made the future very uncertain for many people, myself included, I plan to spend the next year or so working and saving up money to pursue my passion for travel and my dream of teaching abroad.

“Becca led with her heart as a student and as a member of the Augustana community. She followed her interests in people and the places they inhabit to her double majors in geography and anthropology, and she cultivated her commitment to the arts and social justice in her life outside the classroom. She is a great model of a liberally educated person, and I am excited to see the great things she accomplishes as an Augie graduate and a citizen of the world!”

— Dr. Carrie Hough, associate professor, anthropology

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

Coming out of high school, I didn't have one specific major that interested me, so I was drawn to Augustana's liberal arts approach to education. I knew that with well-rounded programs, small class sizes and a walkable campus, I'd be happy no matter which major I chose.

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

When I came to Augustana, I hadn't yet discovered many of my passions other than my love for making music. While I will be forever grateful for Augie's music department and all that the faculty taught me as I pursued my music minor, I quickly discovered my love for learning about people and places. Going into college, I knew virtually nothing about anthropology or geography as academic disciplines, and now, I am so happy to have spent so much time studying such fascinating subjects.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

Undoubtedly, I could not have gotten where I am today without the amazing support from Augustana faculty. I feel so lucky to have learned from so many incredible professors throughout my four years. I will never forget the fantastic experiences the faculty in my departments created for my peers and me. Without them, my Augie experience certainly would not have been the same. Of course, I also received tremendous support and kind energy from other Augie staff, my friends and my wonderful partner.

Peak experience?

This past January, I had the chance of a lifetime to spend J-term in Japan with the SOAN Department and 25 other Augie students. Over the course of three weeks, we visited many villages and cities, including Kyoto and Tokyo, and learned all we could about Japanese culture and experiences with aging populations. Every day was a fulfilling adventure of curiosity, discovery and elation. This trip was truly an experience I will never forget; it solidified my desires to live and work overseas.

What surprised you?

One of the most remarkable surprises I found at Augustana was that over the course of my four years on campus, Augie became even more diverse than when I'd started here. Now, at the end of my senior year, I feel so grateful to know so many people of various ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations and backgrounds.

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How did you use Augie Choice?

During my junior year, I participated in the Rome program, which took place over 10 lovely summer days in the iconic Italian city of Rome. I used my Augie Choice to cover the entire program fee and airfare (plus extra spending money for daily gelato indulgences).

What will you miss the most?

The unique campus life is something I really grew to love. I found so many beautiful little pockets of campus that I could visit several times a week to work on projects, journal, chat with friends and take breaks between classes; it's going to be hard to leave those places behind. Above all, I will miss getting to see my friends and professors almost every day as we now begin our journeys on separate paths.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Get enough sleep. You are going to have projects and papers that might stress you out, and you'll want to stay up until 3 a.m. staring at your words until you forget how to read. Just go to bed. Know that you will be so much more productive if you sleep now and pick it up again in the morning.