



Morgan Anderson

High school: Moline High School

Hometown: Coal Valley, Ill.

Majors: Geography, environmental studies

Minor: Geology

Activities: Zeta Phi Kappa sorority, Geography Club, Equestrian Club, Phi Beta Kappa

Internships: Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District; Natural Resources Conservation Service; Rock Island County Health Department: Environmental Health; River Action; The Urban Advisory; Augustana's Upper Mississippi Center

Post-grad plans: I hope to get a job in natural resource management focused on water resources and aquatic restoration. After gaining some field experience, I plan to go back to school and get my master's in hydrology.

“Not long ago I was asked to supply three words that best describe Morgan. This was a job referral, and I wanted to get it right. A dozen words came to my mind, and I let them sift through until three undoubtedly Morgan-esque adjectives emerged. Morgan is kind: she cares deeply about her people and her world and desires to do her best by them. Morgan is courageous: she stands up to fear and leads. Morgan is resilient: she is flexible, adaptable and will weather adversity. Then I added, ‘and she’s just one of the hardest working people you’ll ever meet. You’ll be lucky to have her.’ We sure were.”

— Dr. Matt Fockler, associate professor,
geography and environmental studies

Augustana

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

Being a local kid, I heard a lot about Augustana. When I was in grade school, we took a field trip to the Fryxell Geology Museum at Augustana and was blown away! Later down the road when it was time to start my college search, I had no idea where to start. Augie was the first school I visited since it was the closest and had made such a positive impression on me growing up. Augie set the bar too high for other colleges. I kept comparing other schools to Augie—and Augie always came out on top.

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

I am not where I thought I'd be! To be honest, I didn't really know where I would be at all. I am a first-generation college student so I did not have any expectations or ideas about what a college experience would be like. I was more scared of college because it seemed like this giant obstacle for me to overcome. I think my goal back then was to try hard, keep going and see where my best efforts would take me. I ended up thriving in college and enjoying it so much!

Who helped you get to where you are now?

My biggest support network throughout this journey was my family. Family has always meant a lot to me, but I learned how much I truly needed them during my college journey. All the panicked phone calls, the weekend getaways, the monthly care packages and the endless encouragement are really what helped me get through school.

Without the financial and emotional support from my Mom and Dad, my college experience would not have been as successful and enjoyable as it was.

In addition to my family, the geography department played a huge role in grooming me to be the successful student I am today. One specific person who made this journey possible is Dr. Matthew Fockler. As my advisor, Dr. Fockler assisted me with career, academic and research advice, and also helped me with many personal struggles I faced.

My friends at Augie all helped make the journey easier as well. Special thanks go to my peers in the geography and environmental studies departments.

Peak experience?

My peak experience had to be my study abroad in New Zealand. As a homebody, I had never been that far from my family. My big adventure up to that point was going to college 20 minutes away. Obviously, “risk and adventure” were not my middle names. I have always wanted to travel to other countries, but doing it alone was definitely more than I imagined.

I gained a new sense of independence and maturity on that trip. It took a lot of courage to get there, but now I am ready for future adventures.

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What surprised you?

I was shocked at how easy it was to talk to professors. I was intimidated at first to even ask for help. These are people who are extremely smart and talented! Being at Augie, however, showed me that not only was it normal to speak with professors, but it was also highly encouraged! Professors at Augie always had my best interest in mind and emphasized communication.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice for my study abroad in New Zealand. This money, in addition to some I saved, helped me to not worry about food costs and side trips. With this money, I was able to snorkel in the island's oldest marine reserve, visit giant sand dunes and travel to the ends of the country.

What will you miss the most?

I will definitely miss campus, but more than anything I will miss the people. Of course I will miss seeing my close friends almost every day and having class with my favorite professors, but I'll also miss those people who I didn't know. Those I would see occasionally, sometimes passing by, and felt happy to see. It's these "wave and smile" relationships I am going to miss the most. These are the people who I didn't know well enough to call good friends, but made campus feel so warm.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Say yes. Don't take your time at Augustana for granted. You may think that you have four years so missing a few events or staying in to watch a movie is no big deal, but these four years go by so fast. Live in the moment. Before you know it, your four years will be over. Live it up while you can!