



Sarah Litwin

High school: Stevenson High School

Hometown: Buffalo Grove, Ill.

Majors: Chemistry, Classics, biochemistry

Minor: Physics

Activities: Búhos (ESL tutoring), Admissions Leadership Team, Omicron Delta Kappa honors society, Phi Beta Kappa

Internships: In the summer after my junior year, I interned in the R&D division of Milliken Chemical in Spartanburg, S.C. I also did research with Dr. Greg Domski in the spring of my sophomore year.

Post-grad plans: Pursue a Ph.D. in chemistry at the University of Chicago

“Sarah is a rock star student, who completed three majors and a minor in four years, while fitting in study abroad and two student worker jobs. We have been so fortunate to have her in Classics, and are glad that she recognized early the benefits of balancing her interest in science with study of the humanities. Sarah exemplifies the best of what Augustana has to offer: I can’t wait to see where she goes from here!”

— Dr. Kirsten Day, associate professor and chair, Classics

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I chose Augustana after visiting over 20 other schools because of the welcoming community atmosphere and support I knew I’d receive to achieve my academic goals. The only reason I had heard of Augustana was because they sent these awesome periodic tables (I’m a nerd, I know) to my high school AP Chemistry class, so I decided to apply without having visited yet.

I ended up coming to all of the visit events my senior year of high school and almost instantly fell in love with the school!

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

In some ways, yes, but in other ways, not at all! I came into college thinking I wanted to major in Classics and biochemistry because I took Latin in high school and wanted to do something related to genetics research. I am still graduating with those majors and am fascinated by each of these subjects, but throughout college, I discovered that my true passion lies more in the physical sciences than the biological sciences. This ultimately led to a huge change in academic and career goals!

Who helped you get to where you are now?

First and foremost, my advisors, Dr. Greg Domski, Dr. Kirsten Day and Dr. Cecilia Vogel. Throughout my time in college, I have taken advantage of the liberal arts focus of Augustana by taking advanced classes in so many different areas, such as ancient Greek and Latin, many different fields of chemistry, and physics. I am so grateful to my advisors who helped to accommodate all of my various interests so I could complete all of the majors and minors that I wanted to complete in just four short years!

Besides my advisors, I am so grateful to all of the professors I’ve had who pushed me to learn more and develop my skills more than I ever thought possible. I have learned so many skills in how to perform research, think critically about what I am learning, and how to communicate what I have learned to others in so many of my classes—even those that didn’t directly relate to my post-grad plans—that I will apply in graduate school and beyond.

Peak experience?

My peak experience was definitely my internship at Milliken Chemical. I learned so much about industrial chemistry during that summer, and my name will likely be included on a patent in the future if one is filed from the work I did! It was an incredible experience to apply all kinds of chemistry that I learned in the classroom before my internship and to work on a project that could have a direct impact on the world.

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What surprised you?

I have been most surprised by how much I love doing hands-on learning and laboratory work. Before Augustana, I much preferred learning in a traditional classroom setting and was somewhat nervous in lab settings, but now the lab is my absolute favorite place to be! I am always fascinated by how I can observe the concepts I learned about in class firsthand.

How did you use your Augie Choice?

I took a three-week trip to Greece after my sophomore year. This was such an incredible experience that forever changed how I think about other cultures and the world in general. I am currently planning another trip to go back to Greece sometime in the future because I loved it so much!

What will you miss the most?

I will miss all of the close relationships I've developed with so many people across campus. From spending time with my friends on the 2nd floor of Hanson to getting to know all of the admissions counselors while working in the Admissions Office to chatting with professors outside of class, I will definitely miss seeing all of these wonderful people on a daily basis, but I hope I'll be able to keep in touch!

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Don't be afraid to change your major or career goals! I started college wanting to go into genetics, then decided I wanted to go to medical school, and now I am looking forward to my Ph.D. program in the fall. A liberal arts institution like Augustana is the perfect place to explore your interests!