



Maegan Patterson

High school: Neuqua Valley High School

Hometown: Naperville, Ill.

Majors: Computer science, English

Minor: Mathematics

Activities: Unabridged, Mortar Board, Omicron Delta Kappa leadership honor society, Campus Ministries, ICPC Programming Contest, al-Khwarizmi Society

Internships: Swimlane (security orchestration, automation and response); Allstate Insurance

Post-grad plans: Software developer at Epic

“It has been a joy and a privilege getting to know Maegan over the years. She has been a stalwart member of our computer programming competition team, a tutor and mentor for younger students, and a cheerful presence everywhere she goes on campus! Another highlight was advising her on an Honors program capstone project junior year, when she combined her skills in creative writing, historical research and computer science to create and publish a mobile app called Augustana Stories, which pairs local stories/legends/history with a campus map/tour.”

— Dr. Forrest Stonedahl, associate professor, computer science

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I chose Augustana because I wanted to attend a smaller liberal arts college. I wanted to be in an environment where I would be challenged to think about things from multiple perspectives instead of purely focusing on my major. I also liked the beautiful campus!

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

Not really! I honestly came into Augustana thinking that there was a pretty decent chance that I'd end up changing my major from computer science to something else. But when I took the Intro to Computer Science class, Dr. Stonedahl's enthusiasm for the subject matter really influenced me to become more interested in it, and that interest has never subsided. Now I really like coding, and I can't imagine myself in a career doing anything else!

Who helped you get to where you are now?

Dr. Stonedahl encouraged me so much to pursue opportunities in computer science and to be confident in my abilities. I never would have thought about applying for a Grace Hopper Celebration Scholarship if he hadn't suggested it to me.

Dr. Gillette also encouraged me to become an English major when it wasn't really something that I had been planning on, and now I'm super glad that I did!

All my advisors (Dr. Stonedahl, Dr. Gillette, Dr. Rodman and Dr. Youngberg) have been a huge help in encouraging me to be the best I can be and to challenge myself. I'm very grateful to all of them for their support and advice over the past four years.

Lastly, the friends that I have made at Augustana have been some of the most wonderful people I have ever met. I'm so glad to have close friends studying other disciplines to teach me to look at the world in different ways. I've learned so much from them, and they truly inspire me.

Peak experience?

Probably the Grace Hopper Celebration, which I attended in Texas last year! I attended many interesting talks and workshops as well as met people from a lot of tech companies. It was so cool to see so many women enthusiastic about technology all gathered in one place! I also ended up interviewing and being offered a summer internship at Allstate while I was there, which was super exciting!

What surprised you?

I was surprised by my ability to fill leadership roles. Before college, I never would have envisioned myself as a tutor or an exec board member of a club, but I've been lucky enough to have had both of those opportunities at Augustana.

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How did you use Augie Choice?

I used it for my internship program in Denver last spring. I interned at Swimlane, and I learned so much about computer science and professional environments.

What will you miss the most?

I'll definitely miss all the friends that I've made. I had so much fun with them over the past four years, and I'll miss getting to see them so regularly now that we're not on campus anymore. I'll also miss the professors who've helped me so much and getting to take interesting classes about whatever topic I wanted.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Try your best in everything that you do and take advantage of the opportunities that come your way! Challenge yourself, but also make sure that you don't overexert or exhaust yourself. And pursue your interests!