



Willow Kornoski

High school: Glenbard North High School

Hometown: Carol Stream, Ill.

Majors: Public health; women, gender and sexuality studies

Activities: Students for Reproductive Freedom, Phi Beta Kappa

Internships: Augustana SafeZone Project

Post-grad plans: Look for a job in community health education and outreach, and in the future earn a master's in public health

“Willow loves to read, and that’s why Willow took any class that had readings related to women, gender and sexuality studies. Willow embodies the characteristics of an Augustana graduate—a committed student who accepted a challenging education and developed a personhood that aligns to what we call ‘liberally educated.’ In addition to developing an expertise in her major field of study, Willow has a vision of how to serve in a diverse and changing world. Congratulations, Willow!”
—Dr. Umme Al-wazedi, associate professor, English

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

To be honest, I had never heard of Augustana until it came up during a college search back in high school, but there was so much that stood out to me, from the small class sizes to the way that every professor makes a lasting personal impact on their students. And Augustana’s generous financial aid made it not only possible, but allowed me to do things I could have never thought I’d be able to do!

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

Definitely not. Coming to campus I could never have imagined spending an entire month in Bangladesh, helping to run not one but several health-related campus events, and finding out that my passion is health education. When I came to Augie, I wanted to be a museum curator! And now, I’ve fallen in love with public health, and I have a passion for helping people in ways I never thought I would have four years ago.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

There are so many people I need to thank, some of whom aren’t at Augustana anymore but helped me get to where I am today.

In no particular order, starting with professors I need to thank are Dr. Umme al-Wazedi, Dr. Hann, and the entire public health and women, gender and sexuality studies departments, and those awesome folks I worked with at Augustana Dining Services; as well as some professors who have left but whose classes helped me expand my horizons and challenged me to change my ways of thinking.

I also need to thank all of my family and friends, who have provided so much support for me over the years, and helped me to pick myself up when things got rough.

Peak experience?

Thanks to an incredibly generous grant from the Freistat Center, I was able to travel out of the country for the first time in my life, to Bangladesh for an entire month with my professor, Dr. Umme Al-wazedi. I immersed myself in a culture I’d never encountered before and met people I never imagined I’d talk to. It was such a humbling experience I will never be able to forget, and I thank every person who helped to make it possible.

What surprised you?

I never really expected to find such a tightly knit community. When hearing about college from other people, they described it as something you just go to. But my time here at Augie has given me so many lasting connections with professors, faculty and staff that I know I’ll be reaching out to people I met here long past graduation.

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How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice funds to support my trip to Bangladesh. I used the money to pay for vaccinations and medicine I would need for the entire month, which I never would have been able to pay for without the assistance of such an amazing resource.

What will you miss the most?

This sounds silly, but the thing I'll miss the most is the Brew! I love going to the Brew between classes to get my work done, and to just see people study and gather together, and seeing my friends behind the counter or at the tables. Having so many friends in Augie Dining Services means that there's always someone I know behind the counter, and they're some of the friendliest faces you'll see! Plus, those custom Augie coffees (ask for a Black Squirrel, you won't regret it).

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Never be afraid to ask your professors or staff for help! Everyone at Augie is compassionate and willing to point you in the right direction; you never know the connections you'll make and the things you'll learn if you don't reach out first.