



Samantha Wright

High school: Pattonville High School

Hometown: Saint Louis, Mo.

Majors: Spanish, political science, psychology

Minor: Latin American studies

Activities: Chi Omega Gamma sorority, Habitat for Humanity, Phi Beta Kappa

Internships: Palomares Social Justice Center; Latin American News Digest; Scott County Juvenile Courts Office

Post-grad plans: Functional family therapist at Families Inc.

“I have come to admire Sam as one of the brightest and bravest students at Augustana. In Spanish classes, Sam is a top performer and a consistent voice in class discussions, even as a native speaker of English in classes disproportionately populated with native and heritage speakers of Spanish. Best of all, Sam is unafraid to ask questions, signaling a desire to learn as well as a readiness to challenge inherited notions and consensus positions.”

— Dr. Megan Havard-Rockwell,
assistant professor, Spanish

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SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I originally chose Augustana because I was recruited to play lacrosse. However, after my first season, I was unable to play due to injuries, yet I decided to stay because I really loved what the liberal arts had to offer me—as cheesy as it is. Augustana allowed me to explore more than one or two interests.

I felt like the academic community at Augustana pushed me to be a great student, and I majored in areas I never imagined for myself. I feel like I really did grow intellectually at Augie.

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

Absolutely not. I have become so involved and attached to the local community. I speak another language, and I am an advocate for immigrants in this country. When I first came to this campus, I didn't know who I would be, but I know I did not imagine I would become someone so passionate about justice. I also did not imagine the close bonds I would build with my advisors. The faculty at Augustana really care about their students and push us to get involved in the things we never would on our own.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

My advisors helped me get to where I am now. I am lucky enough to have four advisors who have my back as a triple major with a minor. I have felt so supported in each of my areas of concentration, and I thank my advisors for where I am now.

They helped me map out my crazy tight schedule that allowed me to obtain the best education I could here. They helped me gain full advantage of what it means to be a “liberal arts” student. In addition, one advisor pushed me to go on a study abroad trip to Ecuador that changed the way I live my life and value my college education.

I am so thankful for all the help I received and for the letters of recommendation that these advisors have written for me. Additionally, they helped me successfully apply to and complete three internships during my college career.

In all, I am thankful for my advisors: Megan Havard-Rockwell, Jamie Nordling, Mariano Magalhães and Chris Strunk.

Peak experience?

My peak experience is definitely my study abroad trip to Ecuador where I stayed with a host family for 10 weeks and spent another week in Peru. This trip allowed me to get out of the country for the first time and to experience cultures and rituals that are much different from my own.

While in South America, I learned about so much history and visited ancient places such as Machu Picchu, the Amazon rainforest and beautiful churches. I gained a perspective I never would have without this experience.

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What surprised you?

What surprised me is how helpful Augustana is. Augustana goes above and beyond when it comes to providing resources and accommodations to its students. If students have a problem or need help, I feel confident that Augustana can provide that assistance—especially with regard to the services provided in CORE. This office is amazing, and every student should use it.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice money on my 11-week study abroad trip to Ecuador. This money, in combination with other scholarships and grants that I applied for, enabled me to afford the trip that really changed how I experience my life. Everyone should go to another country if they can.

What will you miss the most?

I will miss the caring Augustana community. I think that this campus tries hard to not let things slide, and the people (both faculty and students) are not afraid to stand up and speak for what is right. I will miss such an ethically upheld and healthy environment that Augustana has provided me with to grow in these last four years. It truly is inspiring to see how much passion and care exists for social issues and justice on this campus.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Go on a study abroad trip. Whether it is a two-week trip to Guatemala or a semester in Australia, make sure you go away during your four years at Augie. They have so many awesome programs that can help you develop as a person and grow into who you want to be.