



Kayla Jackson

Major: Psychology

Minor: Creative writing

Activities: Augustana Symphony Orchestra, Psi Chi honor society (psychology), Phi Beta Kappa

Internship: As part of my clinical experience, I worked with the Bettendorf Outreach Program. The goal of the program is to reach out to families in need in Bettendorf's school system, providing parents with resources to help their children succeed.

Post-grad plans: Attend The University of Iowa to complete the master's program in educational measurement and statistics

“Getting to know Kayla has been a treat. She is one of the most upbeat, energetic students I've known. I just love the way she channels that into all that she does. It is quite apparent in her commitment to research on adolescent development and family dynamics during separation and divorce. Kayla will continue those pursuits in graduate school and, as a professional, she is certain to help children and adolescents develop strengths to weather difficult times.”

— Dr. Dan Corts, professor, psychology

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2017

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

When I began my post-high school adventures, I had full intentions of pursuing a career in veterinary science. The 3:4 program offered at Augustana supported my goals, so I applied.

Are you where you thought you'd be four years ago?

I am far from where I thought I would be when I first stepped foot on campus! After taking some of the required courses included in Augustana's liberal arts program, I began to realize my interest in psychology. This interest continued evolving, and after changing my major to psychology, I grew to enjoy the psychology statistics courses. My adventure at Augustana began with the intent of becoming a veterinarian but developed into a passion for psychology, research and statistics. I now see myself as either a future statistician, researcher or counseling psychologist working with families of divorce. Only time will tell where my adventures will take me next!

Who helped you get to where you are now?

My biggest influence has definitely been my psychology professors. They encouraged me to pursue my goals, no matter how large, because they knew I was capable of more than even I knew I was capable of. Because of them, I chose to complete a two-part Senior Inquiry, travel to Cuba to present my experiences and findings, and apply to a master's program in statistics, a program I would probably never have imagined myself succeeding in had someone told me I would choose that path years ago. My professors' encouragement opened so many doors for me. I cannot thank those in the psychology department enough for the impact they have made in my life.

A peak experience?

I have had two opportunities to travel abroad, and both of these experiences compete for a spot as my “peak” experience. The first time was as part of a five-week service-learning experience in Cambodia. The trip opened my eyes to the lifestyles in other countries and made me appreciate diversity and uniqueness so much more. I could undoubtedly write a novel about the value of my experiences there, but I will end simply by emphasizing the value of culture and the beauty of difference. There is so much to be learned from those who are different from ourselves.

My second peak experience—an international psychology conference in Cuba—left a mark on my life that I will forever appreciate. This trip was only one week, but in that time, I met people from around the world who were passionate about psychology. It was so interesting to see the similarities and differences between the ways in which each country practices and studies psychology, and to this day, I correspond with a psychology student from Cuba, Isys, to discuss our personal adventures in our fields, both in America and Cuba.

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What surprised you?

I learned that I love statistics! I never imagined myself telling people I would be studying anything related to math, let alone statistics!

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to travel to Cambodia for service learning. I worked with Cambodian children from rural villages, teaching them Western and Cambodian music on the recorder. My group also taught basic English skills to the students. The children were incredible, and the experience was just as educational for me and my classmates. The Cambodian students taught us some words in Khmer and, in the end, friendships and memories were made that will never be forgotten.

What will you miss the most?

I will miss the sense of family at Augustana. Surely, I will experience similar bonds at The University of Iowa, but nothing will ever replace the sense of belonging I felt across the entire campus at Augustana. Whether it was in the dining hall, the psychology department or just walking across campus, there was always a familiar face smiling back at me who was genuinely interested in some part of my day.

Advice for the Class of 2021?

Do not be afraid of what you think you can't do, for whatever reason that may be. I cannot tell you how many times I thought I could never do something because "you have to be rich" or "you have to be special" to do it. Newsflash: we are all special, and you don't have to be rich to chase your dreams. Trust me. If something speaks to you at Augustana, never let financial fears stop you because there are resources! You just have to look!