



Jack Harris

High school: Wisconsin Heights High School

Hometown: Mazomanie, Wis.

Majors: Creative writing, graphic design

Activities: Alpha Psi Omega national theatre honor society, SAGA Art & Literary Magazine, Sigma Pi Delta sorority (honorary), Phi Beta Kappa

Internships: Midwest Writing Center (summer 2019), Taliesin Preservation (summer 2018)

Post-grad plans: Pursuing an MFA in creative writing, location TBD!

“I’ve come to know Jack as both a talented writer and a generous classmate. I’m excited for his future as a writer, but, in many ways, it’s the latter quality that impresses me the most. Jack’s focus isn’t on himself. It’s on making every story he encounters better, and he does that by offering thoughtful analysis and helpful, constructive advice. It’s Jack’s kindness and humility that really resonate with everyone he meets.”

— Brett Biebel, Teaching Fellow of English and First Year Inquiry

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

Coming into college, I knew I wanted to pursue writing and design. Not a lot of colleges have that combination of degrees! If you want to do one or both, your best bet may be to attend an art school. However, I wanted a more well-rounded experience than an education in strictly art would give me. Not only was I interested in courses outside my major, but I was interested in the people, too; Augustana provided that perfect liberal arts environment in which to grow in all areas.

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

If you would have told first-year-me that I would be an honorary of a sorority, I would have laughed, or maybe run in the other direction. Likewise, I never imagined helping build Augustana’s first sketch comedy group, or proudly wearing the letters of a theatre fraternity. I made it a goal of mine to say “yes” to as many experiences as I could, and the payoff has been beyond wonderful.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

If this were my Oscars acceptance speech, the music would start to play me off the stage.

First and foremost, my parents. They had faith in me even when I didn’t have a clue what I was doing. I am extremely lucky to have the family that I have, and I will never stop being thankful for that gift.

Professors and faculty pushed me in class and outside of it. Dr. Heacock-Renaud was the best first professor anyone could ask for. The entire creative writing department gave me a home and guidance: Dr. Kelly Daniels, Rebecca Wee, Dr. Meg Gillette and Brett Biebel, without whom I would most certainly not be going to graduate school. Dr. Jennifer Popple, Jeff Coussens, Vickie Phipps, Kelvin Mason; the list of irreplaceable, supportive and fantastic professors goes on and on.

Beth Roberts and Debbie Blaylock are the best bosses any writer could ask for, and I’m spoiled as a worker! Keri Bass, Margaret France, Anne Earel and Maria Emerson have done nothing but support me from Day 1.

Peak experience?

Every year, Alpha Psi Omega produces the Rocky Horror Picture Show shadowcast, which means we perform onstage with a giant projection of the film while in full costume and makeup. This is a tradition across the country, and the feeling of being a part of something larger while singing with my friends in front of a crowd in (very) high heels, a corset and feather boa is indescribable. It’s one of those moments where you look around and think, “this is a story I’ll get to tell my children.”

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What surprised you?

The incredible array of opportunities available. Coming to Augie felt like a superhero movie montage where the protagonist is testing out the limits of their new powers. That is to say, there were more clubs, scholarships, contests, jobs and mentors for me to experience and learn from than I could have predicted. See how far you can go, and then go a little further.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I studied abroad for a trimester in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Augie Choice gave me the funding I needed for my tickets and food. If I could have a second Peak Experience section, it would definitely be the experience of immersing myself in Dutch culture for 10 rainy, windy, fantastic weeks.

What will you miss the most?

My family. I say "family" because that is truly what I have found at Augustana. We've been so aware this senior year of the end approaching, and that's given this semester a layer of unique bittersweetness. The people at Augie have pushed me to grow into a better version of myself that I never knew existed, and leaving them will be the hardest thing I've had to do. However, in the words of Iron Man, "Part of the journey is the end." Nothing lasts forever. I'm so, so grateful for the time I had.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Engage. Don't shy away from the incredible gift that you have waiting in front of you. These four years go quickly, so use every moment to make connections, learn new skills, and go to that event you're not sure if you want to go to. Breathe. Look around. Appreciate the people sitting next to you.