



Kristen Higginbothan

High school: Normal Community West

Hometown: Bloomington, Ill.

Major: Asian studies

Minor: Japanese

Activities: OSID student mentor, Black Student Union, Asian Student Organization, Augustana Symphony Orchestra, UNYK multicultural dance troupe

Post-grad plans: ALT (Assistant Language Teacher) in Japan for Interac America

“On my office white board wall is a semester full of written conversations in Japanese, initiated by Kristen and a peer. Every week, as Kristen wrote, I watched in amazement of her skill she had developed and her desire to keep learning. Kristen wasn’t afraid to get out of the Augie bubble—she wanted to study in Japan, and she did just that. Kristen found her passion, and I am excited to see where it leads her!”

— Ashley Allen, assistant director, Student Inclusion and Diversity

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

I was able to discover myself at Augustana. The Augustana community is so friendly and open. I was able to meet many lifelong friends here. There is so much to discover about you and your future at Augustana!

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

I am exactly where I wanted to be! I got my dream job. I am more self-confident!

Who helped you get to where you are now?

There are many people who helped me with my success! First is my first-year advisor Keri Bass. I was able to talk to her when I needed advice about my future career.

Second is my major advisor Mari Nagase. She helped me choose a clear path for my major and was able to provide me with many opportunities for my future career.

Last is my Japanese language professor and his wife, Chikahide and Miyuki Komura. They took extra time out of their day to help me with Japanese and made it easy to learn the language. They also were very concerned about my high blood pressure, which has been really bad recently. So, they always make sure that I was doing alright. Thanks to them, my Japanese has improved so much.

Peak experience?

My peak experience was when I got to study abroad in Japan my junior year. That was my first time out of the country. I studied at Augustana’s partner school, Toyo University. It was the most exciting time of my life. I spent six months living in a different culture and society. And learning more about the language and life in Japan has been my favorite experience. I was able to make many friends from across the world due to the experience!

What surprised you?

How friendly everyone is at Augustana.

How did you use your Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice as pocket money for my study abroad in Japan.

What will you miss the most?

I will miss the Augustana community the most, such as my friends and the staff and professors who helped me.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Get ready for one of the greatest adventures of your life!