



Son Nguyen

High school: High School for Gifted Students

Hometown: Hanoi, Vietnam

Majors: Computer science, applied mathematics

Minor: Data analytics

Activities: ICPC Midwest Region Contestant 2016, Al-Khwarizmi honor society, Pi Mu Epsilon honor society, math/CS tutor/grader, Phi Beta Kappa

Internships: Datalab USA, KUDZOO Inc., Augustana's Institutional Research and Assessment Office, Media Link Inc., Vietnam Academy of Science and Technology

Post-grad plans: Work full-time at Datalab USA

“Son’s wry sense of self-deprecating humor is surpassed only by his academic accomplishments! Whether as a student working on a hybrid manual/automatic video tracking system for chickens, as a competitor building robots for the spring robotics challenge, as a teaching assistant marking labs for a computer architecture class or as a student employee analyzing data for Augustana’s Institutional Research and Assessment Office...Son was a bright spot of wit, cheer and competence!”

— Dr. Forrest Stonedahl, associate professor, computer science

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

Augustana was the first college that accepted me during the application process so I never forgot the moment when I received that very first acceptance letter. Moreover, Augustana gave me a very generous financial-aid and scholarship package that so far has assisted me a lot during my time here in the States.

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

Not at all, but in a very positive way. I could never imagine myself taking so many classes that are outside of my comfort zone: music, drawing, fictional writing, geology...you name it! Augustana has allowed me to explore many different things to reach my fullest potential. I also never thought I’d have such great friendships before coming here, but to my surprise, I made not only one, but so many awesome friends!

Who helped you get to where you are now?

I don’t think the word limit would allow me to name everyone at Augie who has helped me to get to where I am today. However, I want to give a special thanks to Dr. Forrest Stonedahl, my computer science professor and advisor; Dr. Andrew Sward, my math professor and advisor; and Tšooane Molapo, my supervisor at the Institutional Research and Assessment Office.

I still remember when I came to my first CS class, I had a lot of doubts about whether CS would be a good choice of major for me, as I was not sure if I really had the interest. But something magical happened, as Dr. Stonedahl turned into a wizard and sparked the curiosity and enthusiasm in me. I will be forever grateful for that.

Dr. Sward is a very special professor. I took many of his classes, but I never once got bored. Somehow, he always knows how to make his class interesting. You must definitely try taking his class if you are one of those who thinks math is boring!

Peak experience?

Successfully running my first Java program. It was a feeling that I could never forget—a combination of pride, satisfaction and pure happiness.

What surprised you?

I was really surprised by how friendly and supportive all of my professors are. This is also what I love about a liberal arts education, as you can build a very close relationship with your professors both inside and outside of classes.

How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice for an internship program in New York City. Besides all the things that I learned from the experience, we had a lot, I mean, A LOT of fun.

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What will you miss the most?

Not what you may expect, but I will really miss the raccoons! I had never seen one before coming to Augie, but they are really cute (can be a bit spooky too, but that's also something I like about them). As I will move to a big city after graduation, it will be very hard to see them again. Sad.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Take the initiative...have backup plans but always expect the unexpected. Things can go off track but remember that you can always make a new track, either by yourself or with the help of the people around you.