



Juliana Pinheiro

High school: Bom Jesus Canarinhos

Hometown: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Majors: Neuroscience, biology (pre-medicine)

Minor: Biochemistry

Activities: Phi Beta Kappa, Beta Beta Beta biology honor society, Psi Chi psychology honor society, Sigma Xi scientific research honor society, Augustana Student Medical Reserve Corps (AS-MRC), Pre-SOMA, Rho Nu Delta fraternity, academic tutor

Internships: Pediatrics and developmental biology research in Dr. Alexandre Medina's laboratory at the University of Maryland Medical School; neuroscience research with Dr. Rupa Gordon at Augustana; physics and engineering research with Dr. Susa Stonedahl and Dr. Scott Gehler at Augustana in collaboration with Saint Ambrose University; neuroimmunology and brain oncology research in Dr. Krishna Bhat's laboratory at MD Anderson Cancer Center; and anatomy research with Dr. Kevin Flaherty at Augustana

Post-grad plans: I will be conducting research in Dr. Krishna Bhat's laboratory at the MD Anderson Cancer Center, and later pursuing a career in medicine and neuroscience research.

“Inquisitive, enthusiastic, selfless, funny, genuine, passionate...that's Juliana. She has taken advantage of many diverse opportunities on and off campus. She thrives at being challenged with complex problems in different contexts that require her to push her limits of understanding. Furthermore, the dedication Juliana exhibits in many facets of her life is a testament to her determination to push herself as well as invest in those around her to do better. These attributes enable her to lead by example and to push the boundaries of what is possible. Thank you, Juliana, for pushing me to do better...you will be missed.”

— Dr. Scott Gehler, associate professor, biology

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

Augustana is an incredibly appealing school. Anyone can talk about the community, the faculty and how beautiful our campus is. However, what draws me even more to Augie can be summarized in one word: intentionality. You feel it when you are having a conversation with a professor, when you ask for academic guidance at CORE or even as you walk through the Brew and see the faces that make this place feel like home. Augustana is not just higher education, it is a purposeful experience.

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

No—but in a good way. Before coming to Augie, I was studying medicine in Brazil. It was a dream-like experience, but I felt like something was missing. Deciding to enroll in a university abroad was a hard decision. Even harder was adapting to a new culture. Augie provided me with a new family, home and passion. I did not foresee research becoming part of my pursuits. However, through the amazing research opportunities I got during my years here, I finally found what was missing all along.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

I am incredibly fortunate to have parents who have given me the utmost support during my time here. I felt loved, respected and appreciated from thousands of miles away. None of my accomplishments would have been possible without them.

Furthermore, it would be a disservice to not acknowledge the professors who have paved the path for my academic success. They have taught me to be bold and unapologetic when it comes to achieving my goals. Moreover, they showed me how to do so ethically and resourcefully.

I am equally in debt to my research mentors who opened a completely new realm of opportunities and inspired my quest for the unknown.

Lastly, I am thankful for my friends who have made “foreign” feel not only comfortable, but desired.

Peak experience?

My peak experience was conducting research in Dr. Krishna Bhat's laboratory at MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas. I do not know if it was the fast-paced environment or being part of something greater than myself that made the summer of my junior year feel like a movie. It consolidated my passion for neuroscience and translational research while giving me a new purpose in life. I don't think anything could beat that.

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What surprised you?

The slow but steady personal development that made me feel like a "grown-up." I used to think a particular birthday would be the determinant factor that made me dive into adulthood. But Augie helped me realize that being an adult is all about not knowing, and then relying on yourself to find the answers--whether it is a matter of introspection or reaching out for help.

How did you use your Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to help afford my research internship at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.

What will you miss the most?

I have a joke with my friends that I believe encompasses perfectly what I will miss the most. Every time we experienced something that made us feel like the stereotypical college student, we would say "This is SO college." It happens when you're drinking coffee at 3 a.m. to study, walking through the empty Quad or in the middle of the Sloughfest crowd. Regardless of the occasion, it was always the same feeling of being infinite--for only that moment. I guess I will miss my moments of infinity.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Intentionality is the most powerful tool you have. Whatever you do, do it wholeheartedly. It is amazing how much you can accomplish when you put your mind to it. Also, remember that no one is an island. Know when to ask for help and who you can take advice from.