



Minh Ta

High school: Kim Lien High School

Hometown: Hanoi, Vietnam

Majors: Computer science, applied mathematics

Minor: Data analytics

Activities: Vietnamese Student Association; ICPC Midwest Region Contestant 2016, 2018; al-Khwarizmi Society; Pi Mu Epsilon (mathematics), Phi Beta Kapp

Internships: Got It, Inc.; Cloudburst Australia, ITS

“I have had so much fun with Minh these past four years. Minh stood out as a student who wouldn’t just put in the extra mile to make a software project great, but would always put in the extra 100 miles! That’s why he was the major force behind the development of the Swedish Immigrant Trail video game that now lives on the Swenson Center’s website. Minh would also drop by my office regularly to chat about computer science, and life. While I am glad that he will be heading on to new adventures, I am also sad to see him go—he will be missed!”

— Dr. Forrest Stonedahl, associate professor, computer science

MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2020

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

Why Augustana?

During the last few months of high school, I was unsure about which college I would choose to spend my next four years. Liz Nino, the director of international recruitment, showed up and brought Augustana to Hanoi. Right after her visit, I knew that Augustana was going to be my home in the States. I knew I made the right decision when I finally came to the campus. Everything was wonderful back then, as it still is now.

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

Before coming to Augie, I already planned to pursue computer science. However, I have never imagined that I would take so many classes outside of what I intended to take. I picked an additional major in applied mathematics and a minor in data analytics, and I learned a lot of things about music, psychology, photography, you name it.

Who helped you get to where you are now?

Dr. Forrest Stonedahl helped me a lot. Without him, I would not be where I am today. Even before we met, Dr. Stonedahl communicated with me via email to help me familiarize myself with the computer science program and what to expect with college life in the States. He became my CS advisor later on, and I enjoyed every moment discussing topics with him.

Dr. Stacey Rodman, my math advisor, helped me with planning, and I wouldn’t have completed this extraordinary college experience without her. Other than my advisors, I would like to thank my professors and friends both in the math and CS departments and at Augie in general. They have helped me sharpen my skills and develop into who I am today.

Peak experience?

I had a lot of fun bringing the Vietnamese culture to friends at Augie! The one experience I would never forget is Tet 2017. We brought Vietnamese dishes and activities to more than 100 people on campus, including staff and professors! It was fantastic observing their genuine reaction to our delicious dishes and fun games and performances.

What surprised you?

How inclusive the community is. I always had a doubt about my ability to fit into a new community in an entirely new country. I was surprised by how people respect and celebrate differences. I have talked to so many people with different backgrounds, and I can tell everyone really enjoys finding out about the different cultures around them.

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How did you use Augie Choice?

I went to Sydney, Australia, in fall 2019. Apart from the technical skills that I acquired in these three months, I met some of the most adorable animals in Australia, photographed the most extraordinary scenery in New Zealand, and had a lot of fun talking to Aussies and Kiwis.

What will you miss the most?

Of course the relationships I've made on campus. The COVID-19 outbreak really messed up my plan, and I missed the chance to say goodbye to my good friends and professors in person. I'm going to miss hanging out with my friends and doing fun stuff with my professors in their class and their office hours.

Advice for the Class of 2024?

Stay in touch with your friends and professors. They are the most valuable resource you will get out of college, so never be afraid to ask them for help. My professors have helped me a lot with my job search, and I'll always open up to help other Augie Vikings in the future.