



## Shelby Kuepker

**Major:** English with an emphasis in writing

**Minors:** Graphic design, communication studies

**Activities:** Office of Student Life, Camp Kesem, Chi Alpha Pi sorority, Omicron Delta Kappa leadership honor society

**Internships:** Fall 2018 – Metropolitan State University of Denver’s Dean of Students Office in Denver, Colo.; winter 2019 – Believe Advertising & PR in Sydney, Australia

**Post-grad plans:** I plan to attend Indiana University at Bloomington for graduate School, pursuing a Master’s Degree in Higher Education & Student Affairs

“Shelby Kuepker is an outstanding student leader who has had tremendous impact within the campus community and beyond. She has taken full advantage of the vast opportunities available here. She has traveled abroad (Australia), interned at Metro University (Colorado) and served in several key leadership roles on campus, including Welcome Week coordinator and executive director of the Student Life Programming Board. Shelby’s work outside the classroom offered intentional experiential learning opportunities designed to hone her skills related to leadership, communication, multicultural competence, clarified values and collaboration. We will miss her.”

— Ken Brill ‘82, associate dean and vice president of student life, leadership and engagement

## MORE THAN I IMAGINED 2019

SENIORS REFLECT ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LOOK AHEAD

### Why Augustana?

I wanted to be surrounded by people who were as passionate about learning as I have been my entire life. Growing up in a small town in Illinois, I had always felt a bit limited in my education, and I yearned to be a part of a community like Augustana where people were constantly encouraging each other to do better. After visiting a few other small, liberal arts colleges, I felt like Augustana was the home for me. My financial aid package and a Close the Gap scholarship from Presidential Bahls sealed the deal.

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

I might not be where I thought I’d be, but I’m where I wanted to be. I remember coming into Augustana and looking up at the student leaders on the stage of Centennial Hall during Welcome Week and thinking, “That’s who I want to be.” I spent the next couple years getting heavily involved with the OSL [Office of Student Life] and fell in love with programming. Three years later, I was that person as the director of Welcome Week. I achieved who I wanted to be, even though I didn’t necessarily think it was possible.

### Who helped you get to where you are now?

The friends I’ve made at Augustana have helped me grow in so many ways, whether it be pushing me out of my comfort zone and trying new things or giving me the confidence to embrace who I am and what I’m passionate about. My family members have always been my biggest cheerleaders back home, and I’m so lucky to have them to go to during stressful times.

I owe a lot of my success to Ken Brill in the OSL because he’s who made me believe in myself my first year. I remember him telling me as I was applying to be a part of the Student Life Programming Board that he thought I was going to be a great leader in the office. As I sat before him as director of that same board my junior year, he told me that I had to embrace the fact that I was going to lead the office for the next two years. Ken has really given me confidence to embrace my skills and abilities to be the leader I am today. My time in the OSL helped me realize that I want to pursue student affairs as a career, and for that I am forever thankful.

### Peak experience?

My time as Welcome Week director this past fall was definitely my peak. Planning and executing the week taught me so much about what I want out of my future career and showed me how much I’ve grown since my first year at Augustana. It was great to be able to look back and see how far I’ve come, from being the shy, passive girl I was then and looking at my transformation into the strong, confident person I am today.

## Shelby Kuepker

**Major:** English with an emphasis in writing

**Minors:** Graphic design, communication studies

**Activities:** Office of Student Life, Camp Kesem, Chi Alpha Pi sorority, Omicron Delta Kappa leadership honor society

**Internships:** Fall 2018 – Metropolitan State University of Denver’s Dean of Students Office in Denver, Colo.; winter 2019 – Believe Advertising & PR in Sydney, Australia

**Post-grad plans:** I plan to attend Indiana University at Bloomington for graduate School, pursuing a Master’s Degree in Higher Education & Student Affairs

### What surprised you?

I have a much stronger passion for social justice and advocating for diversity, equity and inclusion that I did coming into Augie. After being so involved in programming and event planning in the OSL, combined with my internship in the Dean of Students Office of an extremely diverse, amazing school on the other side of the country (MSU Denver), I have a newfound goal of contributing to making college campuses more inclusive places for students of all walks of life. I would not have the same passions or goals I do today without the amazing people at Augustana.

### How did you use Augie Choice?

I used my Augie Choice to study abroad in Sydney, Australia. The additional \$2,000, combined with my scholarships, made this program (that was at first nowhere near my price range) cost almost nothing. It was so amazing to immerse myself in the Australia culture for seven weeks, and this experience would not have been possible without Augie Choice.

### What will you miss the most?

I will probably miss the Brew the most. Being able to walk in and always see a friend or a smiling face is something I don’t know if I’ll ever be able to experience again. It is amazing how this college campus is like one big family, and you know almost everyone no matter where you go. The Gerber Center building has been like a home to me. It’s a place that I know I’ll find a shoulder to lean on when I’m having a bad day, or a place I’ll find a friend when I just need someone to hang out with. The Brew is my favorite place on campus, and I’ve made so many great memories there.

### Advice for the Class of 2023?

Spend more time with your friends. Sometimes you will get in ruts where you focus so much on classes and getting the best grade, and don’t get me wrong, classes are important! But nothing is more important than the people you surround yourself with. Put your friends first because there will never be a time outside of these four years where your favorite people are so accessible to you. Go to all of your club and organization meetings. Go to campus-wide events that are FREE. These are the moments that matter in a college, and don’t spend so much time stressing out about little things that won’t matter 10 years from now. Live in the moment and appreciate every person you interact with.