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Commencement Address: Augustana Awesome!

Steven C. Bahls
Augustana College

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Commencement Address: Augustana Awesome! | Augustana College

Steven C. Bahls, President

Members of the Class of 2015: It is my honor to congratulate you on behalf of the faculty, staff and administration of Augustana College. We are so proud of your accomplishments. And we thank you for the opportunity to serve you. It has been an honor for all of us to share this time in your lives and witness how you have grown. You are now ready to take on the world!

To the parents here today: This is my 12th Augustana Commencement. My greatest joy, and privilege, over the last four years has been to watch your students grow in mind, spirit and body. Like you, I am the parent of an Augustana graduate. My daughter Angela graduated two years ago, and I saw first-hand the magic of Augustana College. How students become wise by learning to turn the crystal and look at complex problems from different angles. Thank you, parents, for your sacrifice in making a high quality education available to your students. Your investment in your student's education will continue to pay off each year for the decades to come.

Students, I remember when you came to Augustana and I addressed your class as first-years. When I looked out across the Opening Convocation, I could see you were a bright group, but apprehensive about the next four years. It warms my heart, and, I assure you the same is true for your families, to see that while you might still be apprehensive about your future, you now have the skills and confidence to build a rewarding life of leadership and service.

This year for the first time in my 12 years I've had a chance to teach a class at Augustana with Dr. Lee in the religion department. Between interacting with you in class, attending so many athletic, theater and music ensemble events, or just visiting with so many of you at my home or during my open office hours, I've seen, first-hand, how strong our students really are. Augie students are engaged in their studies, they are thoughtful, they look at problems from diverse angles, and their creative thinking is nothing short of inspiring. Augie students do not shy away from deep intellectual contact, nor from bringing passion to their work. Our students are, in a word, awesome.

Augustana students are awesome in so many ways. More than 50 percent of our graduating seniors have gotten out of their comfort zone to study abroad, quite literally around the world. Students have pursued internships at record levels this year, and the research done by students this year was simply amazing. For many, the research done at Augustana has earned admission to our nation's top graduate schools.

And students, your volunteer service was equally impressive. This year Augustana students logged an estimated 17,800 hours volunteering. On behalf of your home community for the past four years, let me thank you for making the Quad Cities a better place through your energy, creativity and dedicated service.

Last fall, I had several dozen heavy-duty, Augie "A"s cast. Here's one of them. I decided to give them to our alumni who are our best supporters and best friends. Those receiving the A were those who made a real

difference for Augustana and its students. But as I was walking the slough path to my office a couple of months ago, I was thinking about which supporters and friends to give the next set of Augie "A"s to. (Much of my best thing is done while walking our beautiful campus). Then it came to me. Our best supporters and best friends are actually our students. Students enrich Augustana in so many ways. Our students, especially graduating seniors, are, in a word, AWESOME.

And because you are so awesome, we are starting a new tradition this year. Each graduate will receive, from our board of trustees and our Alumni Association, an Awesome Augie A. This Augie A has 2015 engraved on it. We'd ask you to consider placing this special edition Augie A in a special place where you live or work — and be ready to tell your Awesome Augie story to any who ask.

Through your four years here you have put your mark on Augustana through your research, through your scholarship, through your accomplishments on athletic fields and performance stages, and through your service to the community. And Augustana, through our professors, coaches and other mentors, has put its mark on you. You will always be a part of Augustana and you will always carry Augie Awesome with you.

Students, may the Augie A be a reminder of your years at Augustana. And may it also be a reminder of what it means to be an Augustana alum.

Let the Augustana A be a reminder to hold yourself to the highest standards of critical thinking, remembering that critical thinking is not simply being critical, but being rigorous in turning the crystal by seeing problems from different angles and creative in crafting solutions.

But most of all, let the Augie A serve as a reminder that our purpose in this world is to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God. May we all remember, always, to temper justice with mercy. And to walk humbly, recognizing that your achievements are not yours alone... and that many have helped you along the way.

Students, it has been an honor for all of us to be a part of your lives. We are very, very proud of you! Carry the Augie A proudly. May God bless and keep the Augustana College Class of 2015!



Accounting	Communication Studies	Geography	Music	Pre-Optometry
Africana Studies	Computer Science	Geology	Music Education	Pre-Pharmacy
Anthropology	Creative Writing	German Studies	Music Performance	Pre-Physical Therapy
Art	Economics	Greek	Neuroscience	Pre-Physician Assistant
Art History	Elementary Education	Graphic Design	Non-Profit Leadership	Pre-Seminary
Asian Studies	Engineering	History	Development	Pre-Veterinary Medicine
Biochemistry	Engineering Physics	International Business	Philosophy	Psychology
Biology	English (Literature)	Japanese	Physics	Religion
Business Administration	English (Writing)	Landscape Architecture	Political Science	Scandinavian Studies
Chemistry	Environmental Management	Latin	Pre-Dentistry	Secondary Education
Chinese	& Forestry	Library and Information	Pre-Law	Sociology
Classics	Environmental Studies	Science	Pre-Medicine	Sociology (Social Welfare)
Communication Sciences	Ethics	Mathematics	Pre-Music Therapy	Spanish
& Disorders	French	Multimedia Journalism	Pre-Nursing	Theatre
		& Mass Communication	Pre-Occupational Therapy	Women's & Gender Studies