

Class of 1996

Winter 2018 Class Agent Letter

Greetings, Class of 1996!

Good grief! It's February already, and I've managed to procrastinate and leave the writing of this class letter until the last minute. In moments like this, I struggle to know what in the world to write about – something inspiring, something reflective, something that will hopefully strike a chord with classmates in so many different walks of life. And I ask myself why I didn't start this process a month ago...

But when it comes down to it, writing a class letter isn't about any wit or wisdom I might put down on paper. On the contrary, these letters are about you. They are a way to connect us and remind us of the bonds we share as alumni of a pretty incredible place. These letters are all about sharing your stories, accomplishments, joys and sorrows with classmates who really care about you.

So here's to you, class of 1996! I am honored to share this connection with each of you, and I hope you always feel a sense of pride and belonging as a member of the class of 1996! Keep your updates coming – and always feel free to share other stories or memories, too.

Speaking of memories...

With the 2018 Olympics starting this week, I have had many opportunities to reflect on the gold medal that hung around my neck so many years ago. It has tarnished a bit since then, but it still inspires a feeling of great pride and awe. In fact, it was my crowning sports achievement—earned along with a stellar team (“the Group” as Dr. Olsen always called us!) at the Ole-lympics during New Student Seminar that first week on campus. Ha! As I watch the great Olympians in the weeks to come I can't help but wonder how many of them can spin around a bat 10 times and run straight to the finish line without smacking a tree...

And how about traying down the hill by the President's house? Now THAT is a sport with Olympic potential. Or streaking around the perimeter of campus late at night, with Campus Safety officers in tow? I remember standing with the timekeeper watching some serious records being set! We always knew the class of '96 had some stellar athletes, but I think there are a few among us with hidden potential who are just waiting for their moment of glory...

OK, on to a quick recap of great things happening on campus.

- Augustana has a new president! In September, Stephanie Herseth Sandlin was inaugurated as the 24th president (and first female president!) of Augustana. President

Herseth Sandlin follows former president Rob Oliver, who retired after 11 years of service at the helm of our Viking ship.

- We are growing! This year's class of 481 first-year students was the largest incoming class since 1978. These students come from 20 different states and 10 different countries. In addition, the overall student body increased 7.5% from last year to 2,080. This is the largest enrollment since 1990!
- Still going strong. According to the Student Success Center, 98% of the Class of 2016 graduates are employed in their major or chosen field. And in 2017, Augustana once again was ranked in Forbes' listing of America's Top Colleges.
- Way to give! Augustana's first ever Giving Day set a single-day record for the most gifts received in a 24-hour period, raising nearly \$136,000 for student scholarships. Alumni led the way in the giving; nice job, alumni! Please consider being part of Giving Day 2018 on Thursday, March 1.
- Boe Forum. Acclaimed astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson drew nearly 4,000 people to campus for a wonderful lecture during the 2017 Boe Forum. This year's Boe Forum features former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. It will take place on March 20.
- Retirements. Three long-time faculty, Dr. Sandra Looney '62 (English), Dr. Peter Schotten (Political Science) and Dr. Duane Weisshaar (Chemistry) will retire at the end of this academic year. Watch for more details about how you can honor these Augustana teaching legends.

And here it is! News about you!



Augielink Class Notes

02/22/2017-01/31/2018

Voelker-Morris (Voelker), Julie - Posted 8/23/2017 3:23:51 PM - Careers

During Spring 2017, I was awarded one of the most prestigious undergraduate teaching awards at my institution, the University of Oregon. For publication purposes, you can learn more about the award at <http://around.uoregon.edu/content/williams-council-awards-fellowships-and->

instructional-grants?utm_source=ato05-30-17 and <http://academicaffairs.uoregon.edu/williams-fund>

Torres (Torres), Ana - Posted 6/1/2017 9:01:47 AM - Deceased

Ana M. Torres-McCartin of Denver, Colorado died on April 6, 2017. Surviving Ana are her mother and 7 siblings.