

URGO Alumnus Spotlight

Chung Lip '18



Chung Lip '18 graduated from Augsburg with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a minor in Psychology. He also earned a Master of Public Health in Population and Family Health at Columbia, and a certificate in Infectious Disease Epidemiology. He is a certified Covid-19 Contact Tracer and Health Education Specialist, and in a few short weeks, he will be a Registered Nurse.

Chung came to Augsburg in his second year of college. His host mother worked for Augsburg's Center for Global Education, but Chung says her connection wasn't what eventually brought him to Augsburg.

"I did a tour at Augsburg and sitting in the cafeteria, I got to sit with people from all over the world. One student was from Norway, one from China, one from Korea, a local Minneapolis student, and I'm from Cambodia, that experience shocked me. I can't find any place that's better than Augsburg for that kind of experience," says Chung.

While at Augsburg, Chung was an Interfaith Scholar, a Christensen Scholar, a Mayo Innovation Scholar, and URGO Summer Researcher. He also received the Linda Schrempp Alberg Endowed Leadership Award in 2016. Chung enjoyed his experiences in the Interfaith and Christensen Scholar programs.

"They were not just about religions, but about community work and caring for locals. The work was about the faith behind education," says Chung. "Augsburg is not just a place to come and get a degree, but a place that I have learned to care, to love, and after all, to explore my life-long core commitment."

During his time as a Christensen Scholar, Augsburg paired Chung with an alumni mentor who had a biology background. Chung said his mentorship with Nasreen Sajady '11 was perfect because it allowed him to learn and gain experience from someone who had a similar path as him.

While he enjoyed the scholars' programs, the experience that most impacted Chung was his time as an URGO Summer Researcher.

Chung worked with Dr. Matthew Beckman on a water flea eye development project. Along with three other students, Chung worked on genetic and genomic research tools to learn more about the eye development of water fleas.

"They're really unique, they have compound eyes that develop into one eye as they grow. Our research was to see if this development could be used for humans in some way. It was a unique opportunity to apply book knowledge to real work. I'm very proud to have been part of Dr. Beckman's research."

After shadowing doctors for an internship, Chung knew he wanted to have a community-based or community-wide impact with his work, which is how he ended up at Columbia studying Public Health. He graduated in 2020, during the pandemic, and found that the job market was scarce. So Chung thought about how he could use his public health background to do more than just contact tracing.

"I thought Nursing. I can do public health nursing, make a greater impact on the community while I'm caring for patients at the bedside."