97 Percent of 2011 Augustana Graduates Accept Employment

While the national unemployment rate continues to hover above 8 percent, 97 percent of 2011 Augustana graduates seeking employment have accepted a position related to their major or chosen field.

According to a recent report by the Augustana Career Center, among the 342 recent graduates who pursued positions in nursing, human services and business, 100 percent report they are now working in those fields. In education—a hot topic locally and nationally—98 percent of Elementary/Special Education majors report being employed in their field.

In addition, 75 percent of 2011 graduates accepting employment remained in South Dakota. Of the 189 graduates now working in South Dakota, 98 were originally residents of the state.

“These numbers speak to the power of a liberal arts education in an uncertain economy,” said Rob Oliver, president. “From the broad-based knowledge provided by our renowned professors, to the exposure and perspective gained through international travel, to the ideas that swell from a culturally and ethnically diverse campus—their time at Augustana, our liberal arts educated graduates have mastered the ability to think critically, reason analytically and thoughtfully, and write effectively. They are well-suited to contribute and thrive in virtually any field, anywhere around the globe.”

“At the same time, we’re proud to say that Augustana continues to be a net importer of intellectual capital to the state of South Dakota. Our students enter Augustana to learn and they leave with a commitment to serve—to make tomorrow’s world even better. They’re doing just that in South Dakota communities east and west of the River.”

In addition to accepting jobs after graduation, 20 percent of 2011 graduates are now enrolled in graduate programs. Of those, 31 percent are in medical school; 20 percent are pursuing advanced study in the sciences, such as biology and chemistry; and 7 percent are in law school.

Augustana’s 97 percent job placement rate for 2011 graduates is an increase of 3 percent over the placement rates for May 2010 graduates.

Critical to graduate outcomes is the Augustana Career Center, which works with employers around the world to match students and soon-to-be graduates to internships and open positions. The Center also helps students prepare for the transition from college to career by providing resume-building advice, interview coaching, workshops and the annual Career Symposium, which features panel discussions by Augustana alumni in a variety of career fields.

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– Rob Oliver, President

Nesheim Named Director of The Augustana Choir

Dr. Paul Nesheim has been named director of The Augustana Choir, the fifth in the Choir’s 90-year history.

He succeeds Dr. James Johnson, who was named principal conductor of Choral and Instrumental Ensembles for First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls in summer 2011.

For the 2011-12 academic year, Dr. Weston Noble, former long-time conductor of the Luther College Nordic Choir, has served as interim Choir director. Nesheim most recently served as associate professor of music and director of choral activities at Minnesota State University Moorhead, where he conducted three choirs and taught choral conducting. He also served as artistic director of the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber Chorale and the conductor of the Senior Choir at the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Moorhead.

Dr. Nesheim has served on the faculties of Concordia College in Moorhead and Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota. He has held positions conducting high school, church, and community choirs in Minnesota, California, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Arizona.

Dr. Nesheim holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in music education from St. Olaf College, a Master of Music degree in choral music from Arizona State University, and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in conducting from the University of Arizona. He has studied conducting with Maurice Skones, Douglas McEwen, Kenneth Jennings and Miles Johnson. Nesheim is an active member of the American Choral Directors Association, and is a frequent clinician and guest conductor for high school festival and honor choirs. He is a published composer and the author of “Building Beautiful Voices,” a book of vocalization methods and materials published by the Roger Dean Publishing Company.
Juniors Molly Kokesh (Scotland, S.D.) and junior Maren Engel (Owasso, Okla.) have been named the 2012 Peace Prize Forum Scholars. The Peace Prize Forum Scholars program is sponsored by the Nobel Peace Prize Forum, a consortium comprised of Augustana College, Augsburg College, Concordia College ( Moorhead), Luther College, and St. Olaf College. Two students from each of the participating colleges will spend seven weeks at the University of Oslo's International Summer School deepening their understanding of issues related to peace, justice, democracy, and human rights.

Kokesh, a German and Government/International Affairs major and Political Philosophy minor, was Augustana's 2012 Truman Scholarship nominee, an honor designed for those who intend to pursue a career in governmental and non-governmental public service. A distance runner and a member of the cross country and track teams, Kokesh recently returned from spending a semester abroad in Austria. After Augustana, she plans to enter a dual degree program to pursue a law degree and a Ph.D. in environmental studies. She hopes to specialize in a curriculum concentrating on environmental social science in order to study the relationship between societal processes and environmental contexts.

Engel, a Music/Vocal Performance and Classics major, has already developed an impressive record of international study. As a freshman Distinguished Scholar, she studied in Greece and, earlier this year, she spent nearly a month in India. "She is a member of the Augustana Choir, the Augustana Student Association (ASA), Viking Varieties, New Student Orientation (NSO) leadership and serves as an Augustana Student Ambassador. In early 2011, she was among 300 singers selected from more than 1,200 national auditions to perform in the Collegiate Women's Honor Choir at the 2011 National American Choir Director's Association (ACDA) convention in Chicago.

As Peace Prize Forum Scholars, Kokesh and Engel will embark on coursework that will include the causes of armed conflicts, peace building, peacemaking, humanitarian interventions and aid, peacekeeping operations, gender, civil society and nonviolence and peace movements. In conjunction with their studies, Peace Prize Scholars will also work on projects they will present at the 2013 Peace Prize Forum and at least two other venues throughout the upcoming year. The Scholars will also visit a number of influential institutions including, The International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), Nobel Institute, Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights and the Nobel Peace Center.

Dr. Susan S. Hasseler has been named senior vice president for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College. She will begin her new role this summer.

Her appointment marks the first time in Augustana’s 151-year history that a woman will serve as Dean of the College.

Hasseler succeeds Dr. Mark Braun who was named Provost and Dean of the College for Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn., last spring. For the 2011-12 academic year, Dr. Murray Haar, professor and chair of the Department of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, has served as Interim Dean.

"Dr. Hasseler is a passionate educator, a talented scholar and an extraordinary leader with more than 35 years of experience in K-12 and higher education. Her experience in recruiting and retaining exceptional faculty, developing curriculum, and establishing outreach initiatives for students, alumni and community members, along with her track record for innovation and her willingness to go the extra mile on behalf of the faculty, staff and students she serves absolutely make her well-suited for this role," said Rob Oliver, president of the College.

Hasseler most recently served as the Dean of Business, Education and Social Sciences and the Dean of Community Engagement at Messiah College in Grantham, Pa. (near Harrisburg), where she oversaw the management and business, elementary and secondary education, psychology, human development and family science, social work and sociology, anthropology and criminal justice departments; the counseling, TESOL, special education; and graduate programs.

"As someone whose hobby is exploring new places, I was immediately intrigued by Augustana’s invitation to “Go Viking.” Working with a top quality faculty and staff to create new opportunities for students to explore in ever widening circles; to serve in Sioux Falls, the region, and the world; to discover the wonder of the natural and social sciences, the humanities, the arts and athletics; to create communities on campus and off – there are so many opportunities at Augustana that excite and challenge me as a leader," Hasseler said.

“1 am especially looking forward to exploring what it means to embrace diversity and innovation within the context of a rich Lutheran tradition. I am eagerly anticipating having many opportunities to celebrate the joy of Augustana with alumni, faculty, staff, and students in the years to come,” she said.

Prior to Messiah College, Dr. Hasseler served as Associate Dean for Teacher Education at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., from 2000-2008. There, her responsibilities included visioning and strategic planning, community engagement, grant development and evaluation, the development of international programs and online graduate programs; faculty recruitment and development; curriculum development, accreditation and assessment; student recruitment and retention; faculty and staff supervision for an undergraduate teacher preparation program of 750 students and a graduate program of 150 students.

Dr. Hasseler is no stranger to Sioux Falls, having taught in the Unique Learning Experiences program at Patrick Henry Middle School and multiple elementary schools from 1986-1990.

A skilled grant writer, Dr. Hasseler served as the administrator for youth mentoring grants totaling more than $1.4 million from 2008-2011 alone. She is the author of numerous articles on education-related issues and has presented at forums for educators throughout the globe.

Dr. Hasseler holds a bachelor's degree from Calvin College, a master's degree in Special Education from the University of South Dakota, and a Ph.D. from the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.