

SAG Reflection: Margaret Rosner

When I was a senior in high school, and trying to decide what university I would attend, the main reason that Olin stood out above all of the other schools I applied to was because of the opportunities it provided its students. Olin was one of the only places where I saw that undergraduate students had the ability to work with and know their Professors. That kind of access was, and still is, incredibly important to me.

Last year, half way through my first year at Olin, I was given the opportunity to work with Professor Caitrin Lynch on her summer research team. When I accepted I didn't fully understand the scope of the project, but I was drawn to the opportunity it provided to work production in a factory and work on an engineering project that I could see come to fruition from start to finish. This academic year I have continued working with Caitrin on her same research project. Our focus has changed since the summer where a majority of our time was spent on the engineering project and we spent less time focusing on the anthropology side of the research. For the past two semesters, we have spent a majority of our time diving into and exploring the data collected through interviews and gaining a deeper context for the field itself. At the beginning of the second semester we were given an opportunity to present our research on a document studies panel at the 2018 AES-SVA conference. At this point our research focus narrowed and we dived into understanding the different forms of documentation at the mill while creating a presentation and paper.

The whole process of preparing for and attending an academic conference was an experience I had never experienced before. The experience was particularly unique because we were preparing for an anthropology conference. Engaging in that preparation process taught me a lot about how to think as an anthropologist and the world of academic anthropology and strengthened my comprehension, writing, and critical thinking skills.

In addition to preparing for the conference, attending the conference was an incredible experience. I was blown away by the amount of knowledge there was flowing out of all of the people around me. The curiosity and dedication to understanding communities I saw from the anthropologists blew me away. It made me think more about what anthropology has added to my engineering education and how I could engage more with that world in the future.

Finally, as a student I have never felt a strong affinity to one particular subject. As a kid I was never a genius in one particular area I was simply good at everything. The ability to engage in multiple areas of study is something that I, before starting this research, I felt I had lost since coming to Olin and this conference was a great reminder that I don't have to settle on one specific field and I can continue to explore as I grow as a student and as an individual.