

## Personal Statement

When I was younger living in California, my parents would take me to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. I would always enjoy seeing all the marine life and how so lively it felt to be surrounded by creatures almost 3x my size. One of my favorite movies growing up was *Dolphin Tale* and I was just so fascinated by the way they helped Winter (the dolphin) get her tail back by using data on how her body works and making sure the prosthetic fits just right for her. I knew that that's what I wanted to do growing up. I wanted to find ways to help injured sea animals, especially the endangered ones.

In high school, I took courses like marine biology, ap chemistry, and calculus that were offered to allow me to explore my curiosity about science and the nature of the world. I was also involved in extracurricular activities like soccer, cross country, and track. Doing all of these things made me develop skills that I would be able to use in my career job like time management, teamwork, leadership, and lab experience. One thing that I enjoyed doing in my chemistry and biology classes were the labs when we would do experiments and problem solve together. In marine biology, for example, there was this one experiment where we were dissecting a shark and while it smelled really bad and kinda grossed me out, I learned a lot in that experiment. It brought me out of my comfort zone and opened my eyes to how complex the anatomy of life was. We not only talked about the anatomy of the shark but also the environmental influence it was in and how that affected the shark's biology. This experiment opened a door to my interest in exploring the intersection of biology and environmental science. By doing so, I got in touch with my biology professor who volunteered at the Norfolk Zoo and encouraged me to take my passion for animals beyond the classroom. So last summer I applied to be a zoo volunteer and be a part of their mission. The mission of raising awareness about the human impact on wildlife and promoting solutions to reduce pollution. Through this role, I got involved with visitors and helped them understand the importance of community involvement in environmental protection. This opportunity deepened my appreciation for the interconnectedness of all the living systems and strengthened my resolve to contribute to the preservation of marine ecosystems. My decision to pursue Marine Biology at Old Dominion University was driven by the opportunities for undergraduates, including internships and fieldwork in marine sciences.

Going to ODU, I chose to be a marine biologist because I believe it is crucial for not just me but everyone to understand how to preserve, and manage the ocean's ecosystem. To be able to study marine life and protect endangered species and maintain biodiversity. To be able to collect valuable data for fisheries and ocean resources to use. To grasp the concept of the ocean's reaction on climate change. Like the impact of melting glaciers on marine species and land species. Being able to comprehend and solve the situations that affect our world and their world is the goal I'm reaching for. With ODU's resources and support I am confident that I can build the knowledge and skills to achieve my goal of becoming a marine biologist dedicated to protecting our oceans and educating others about their significance.