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BIOL 294

Professor Rinehart-Kim

9/5/2024

**Personal Statement Writing Assignment 1**

 Growing up I have always been fascinated by water, the ocean and more specifically the vast variety of beautiful creatures living in said ocean. I have always wondered what is out there and why more people are not exploring everything the ocean has to offer. This passion and interest in the field led me to undergo a Marine Biology major with a minor in Leadership Conservation at Old Dominion University. I am currently a senior who has gotten the opportunity to take some pretty fascinating courses that relate to the field and have deepened my understanding on more than what originally sparked my interest. I am eager to further my knowledge of marine ecosystems as well as contribute to their conservation through an array of field work and advanced research.

 My academic journey in marine biology began with foundational courses such as general biology, general chemistry, and a variety of different math and physics courses. It was not until my junior year that I got to really dive deep into more specific courses that related to marine biology and conservation. For instance, last spring semester in my junior year, I took an Outdoor Recreation course that was an elective option for my minor. While that course did not focus on marine biology itself, the course opened my eyes about day-to-day conservation efforts that are in effect at local, state, and national parks, as well as what specific things people can do in their everyday lives to help protect wildlife and their homes that we like to explore. Additionally, one part of the course involved real world experiences, one of which I went down to Rainbow Springs Florida over Spring Break and got to camp, hike, kayak, and my personal favorite, snorkel with manatees. As much as I enjoyed going on the trip, I also learned a lot about myself and a bunch of new skills such as tent and fire building. Similarly, another course that has opened up opportunities for me more than just content was my Oceanography course my freshman year. While taking this course I found myself really grasping onto new material well and performing quite well in the lab exercises. By the end of the course the professor reached out to me and asked if I wanted to tutor this course to future students taking the course. I was honored, took the tutoring position, and still tutor Oceanography to this day.

In conclusion, the field of marine biology has always been a huge passion of mine and over the past several years I have gotten the chance to deepen my knowledge and understanding in the field. My academic experiences both in and out of the classroom have provided me with skills needed for challenges in marine environments. As I approach the next chapter of my academic and professional career, my goal is to contribute to the field of marine biology by improving our understanding of marine ecosystems and developing innovative strategies for their protection. I am excited to undertake this journey and make a meaningful impact in the field of marine biology.