Meet Your Peer Counselors!
The Marine and Atmospheric Science Program

Welcome all incoming and prospective students! As the Peer Counselors, we would like to introduce you to life as a student at both the University of Miami and the Rosenstiel School for Marine and Atmospheric Science (RSMAS). Incoming students are paired with a Peer Counselor who will help make the transition into college as smooth and enjoyable as possible, both academically and socially. We are here as guides for incoming and prospective students who are interested in studying marine and atmospheric science. If you have any questions about the program, the campus, life at the university, or anything else, please email any one of us, and we will do our very best to help you find an answer to your questions.

**Samantha Shedd, Co-Head of the Peer Counselors**
- **Majors:** Marine Science and Biology
- **Minors:** Microbiology
- **Class:** 2018
- **Email:** s.shedd3121@gmail.com
- **Favorite Marine Animal:** Juvenile Black Spotted Drum

Hello! My name is Samantha Shedd, but I go by Sammy. I'm from New Orleans, LA and a junior at UM. I work in the marine science department as well as at RSMAS taking care of coral. I'm always very busy on the weekends being involved in Rho Rho Rho and SCUBA club. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the awesome opportunities the clubs at UMiami. I have gone SCUBA diving with whale sharks, played with dolphins, and gone on other amazing trips with both groups, most of them for free. This summer, I will be working at RSMAS helping a graduate student with her experiment and continuing to take care of her corals. If you have any questions at all, please email me!

**Breanna Aldred, Co-Head of the Peer Counselors**
- **Majors:** Marine Science and Biology, Pre-Medical Track
- **Minors:** Chemistry
- **Class:** 2017
- **Email:** breannaaldred@miami.edu
- **Favorite Marine Animal:** Cuttlefish

My name is Breanna and I am from Waukesha, Wisconsin. I am entering my Junior year at UM, but I will be graduating a year early in May 2017. I am majoring in Marine Science and Biology, minoring in Chemistry, and I am on the Pre-Medical Track. Although Wisconsin doesn’t exactly border any marine ecosystems, I have always loved the ocean and became interested in Marine Science when I was Scuba certified at age 10. At UM, I am the Vice President of Rho Rho Rho (the Marine and Atmospheric Honor Society), the Vice President of the Miami Motion Dance Team, and a member of the Scuba Club. I researched at the National Resource for *Aplysia* (sea slugs) at RSMAS for 2 semesters and I am doing cardiovascular aging research at a hospital this summer. The University of Miami is an amazing school and I’m sure that you will love your time here! I look forward to meeting you in August and if you have any questions or concerns, email me!
Carl Anderson
Majors: Marine Science and Biology
Minors: Chemistry
Class: 2019
Email: cna26@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Green Moray
My name is Carl Anderson and I'm from from Arlington, VA. I'm a sophomore studying Marine Science / Biology. I've been an active member of Scuba Club since getting certified last fall, as well as participating in Rho Rho Rho and serving on the E-Board of UM Aquarium Club. I first became interested in Marine Science while visiting the New Jersey shore when I was younger. Last semester I volunteered at the Aplysia Facility on the Rosenstiel Campus.

Joslen Beitel
Majors: Marine Science and Biology
Minors: Psychology and Math
Class: 2017
Email: jabeitel@me.com
Favorite Marine Animal: Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin
Hey friends! My name is Joslen. I am a senior majoring in Marine Science and Biology and minoring in Math and Psychology. I have wanted to spend my life working with the ocean and its amazing animals for as long as I can remember. It was my passion for marine science that brought me here to UM from my home state of Nebraska. Our school provides us so many incredible opportunities and I am so thankful to be able to take advantage of them. Last semester, I spent the best three months of my life living in the Galapagos Islands for the UGalapagos study abroad program! I am also involved in many of the organizations UM has to offer here on campus. I am the president of the Marine Mammal Rescue team, a member of Rho, an active diver in the SCUBA club, and a member of the Miami Motion Dance Team. This past summer, I was an animal care and training intern at Dolphins Plus in Key Largo.

Anthony Bonacolta
Majors: Marine Science and Microbiology & Immunology
Minors: Chemistry
Class: 2019
Email: amb195@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Swordfish
I'm from Lehigh Acres, Florida. I’m studying Marine Science and Microbiology and Immunology. I’m a huge Yankees fan and my favorite TV shows are Daredevil, Big Brother, and House of Cards. I enjoy photography and I’m the Vice-President of the UM Photography Club. This summer I will be volunteering with the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, aiding them in oyster restoration.
Alexandra Burns
Majors: Marine Science and Biology
Minors: Chemistry
Class: 2017
Email: a.burns2@umiami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Frilled Shark
Hi, I’m Alexandra Burns and I am a senior majoring in Marine Science and Biology with a minor in Chemistry. My hometown is Lake Orion, Michigan where the water has less salt. Last year, I studied abroad with the UGalapagos program, where I worked on my Spanish and fieldwork techniques. In my free time, I enjoy campus life, swimming laps at the gym and attending movies at the Cosford Cinema. I am a member of Rho Rho Rho, the Marine Mammal Rescue Team, and SCUBA Club. This year, I will be working in the lab identifying proteins in sharks. I plan on pursuing a PhD and a career in research. I am super excited to be a peer counselor this year and please don’t hesitate to ask me any questions!

Kristin Butler
Majors: Marine Affairs and Ecosystem Science & Policy
Class: 2018
Email: k14butle@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: *Mola mola*, Oceanic Sunfish
I’m from Bethesda, Maryland (10 minutes outside of DC), but I recently moved to Miami. I love to run, hike, and do just about anything outside. I also really enjoy yoga and meditation. I am vegan and love to dance and sing along to my favorite music (I am fabulous at both...). In my experience at UM I have learned how to glass blow, weld, blacksmith, and furthered my previous experience with ceramics. I am thinking about turning my 3-D art cognate into a minor because I believe that art can be a great tool for science communication. As for my involvement, I am the Vice Chair of the Energy and Conservation Organization (ECO) Agency of UM Student Government. I also am in Rho Rho Rho and the Co-President of the Earth Alert Club. Additionally, I intern with Miami Waterkeeper—a non-profit organization that strives to ensure drinkable, fishable, and swimmable water for everyone and all of the wildlife in South Florida via legal work, scientific research and community outreach. This past summer I traveled with a RSMAS professor named Dr. Suman to Vietnam and China to study “Water Resource Management: Law, Policy & Science” in which we backpacked, explored, and tried a lot of new food.
Joelle Destache
Majors: Marine Science and Biology
Minor: Chemistry
Class: 2017
Email: j.destache@umiami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Whale Shark
Hi! My name is Joelle Destache and I am a senior studying marine science and biology, minoring in chemistry from St. Paul, Minnesota. I studied abroad during the fall semester of my junior year in Australia at James Cook University. I enjoy scuba diving and am part of the SCUBA Club on campus as well as Global Ambassadors. I also do coral research for NOAA. My research focuses on various stressors that corals encounter. My favorite marine animal is the whale shark.

Kiana Ford
Majors: Marine Science, Biology and Ecosystem Science and Policy
Minor: Chemistry
Class: 2019
Email: kford8@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Orca
Hi my name is Kiana and I'm originally from Juneau, Alaska but I moved to Chicago four years ago. I'm a triple major in Marine Science, Biology, and Ecosystem Science and Policy with a minor in Chemistry. Some fun facts about myself, I took a gap year and danced with the Joffrey Ballet in Chicago and this past year was on the Hurricanettes Dance Team. This summer I will be volunteering at a nature museum. My favorite marine animal is an orca.
Sierra Fullmer

Majors: Marine Science and Biology
Minors: Chemistry, 3D Studio Art, Psychology
Class: 2018
Email: sfullmer@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Sea Otter

Hi! I’m Sierra Fullmer, one of the few Marine Scientists you’ll ever meet from Phoenix, Arizona. My love for animals started as a kid, with a wildlife rehabilitator for a dad and a house full of animals. It transitioned into a love of all marine animals when I began SCUBA diving as a scuba ranger at the age of 8, and earned my SCUBA certification a few years later. I am the current stranding coordinator for the Marine Mammal Rescue Team on campus. However, I still manage to find time to remain active in the Marine and Atmospheric Science Honors Society (Rho Rho Rho), volunteering at the Humane Society of Greater Miami, and organizing a cool outreach event called Ocean Kids! In addition to my club activities I work in association with researchers at Monkey Jungle doing vocalization research on their resident nocturnal Owl Monkeys. I get to do early morning (3am!) observations of these monkeys and develop my skills with spectrogram vocal analysis for my future studies in marine mammal behavior. After all this my free time is split between the many club trips our organizations host, homework, sleeping, and working in the art studio on my glass blowing and welding techniques. My summers are just as busy as my school years, teaching summer school biology at my high school back home and, this year, working with the sea lions and otters at the Wildlife World Zoo and Aquarium in Arizona. I can’t wait until you all get to love UM as much as I do and find your own areas to explore. If you have any questions about the University, classes, campus life, or any clubs and activities you want to do, feel free to reach out! If you just want to chat, I’m always willing to spend sometime talking about my favorite marine animal, sea otters, and hear all about yours! Feel free to reach out to me via email, phone, or even Facebook. I look forward to meeting you in person this fall!

Julie Gross

Majors: Marine Science and Biology
Minors: Chemistry
Class: 2019
Email: jmg163@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Basking Shark

Hi everyone! I’m Julie and I’m a sophomore marine science and biology major with a minor in chemistry. I’m originally from a little town called Norway, Kansas of only 13 people! I fell in love with the ocean at a young age when I first went on vacation here in Florida and I have been fascinated by it ever since. This summer I am doing a weeklong elasmobranch field skills course. I absolutely adore sharks and am extremely passionate about their conservation. On campus I am involved in SCUBA club, Marine Mammal Rescue Team, Rho Rho Rho, and the service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega. UM is an awesome university with great people and there’s absolutely no place I’d rather be (except maybe the beach). I can’t wait to meet you and if y’all have any questions about college feel free to email me!
Benjamin Hall
Majors: Marine Science, Biology and Biochemistry
Class: 2018
Email: bennyyboxx@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Nudibranchs
Hey guys! My name is Benjamin Hall and I’m a junior studying Marine Science, Biology, and Biochemistry. I’m from Torrance, California (near Los Angeles) and I love volleyball and watersports (wakeboarding, surfing, etc). I’m on the University of Miami’s hip hop dance team KAOS, I’m the Public Relations chair for the Marine and Atmospheric Science Honors Society, and I’m involved in SCUBA Club and the Wakeboarding Club. I spent last fall studying abroad in Australia (hence the koala picture) and got to dive the Great Barrier Reef and see the Phillip Island Penguin Parade. I love UM and I’m super excited for you new students that chose to come here!

Sydney Harned
Majors: Marine Science and Biology
Minors: Chemistry
Class: 2018
Email: s.harned@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Water Bear
My name is Sydney, I’m a junior from Dallas, Texas. I’ve been in love with the ocean ever since I went to marine biology camp in 7th grade, and UM is my dream school! I’m a marine science and biology major with a chemistry minor. I am a scuba instructor and the training coordinator for the UM Scuba club. I am also an active member of Rho Rho Rho. This summer, I’ll be a camp counselor for Camp on the Sea, a marine science focused camp with kayaking, snorkeling, paddle boarding and other fun water activities. I love nurse sharks, yellow boxfish and nudibranchs. I am also the proud dog mom of an elderly Chihuahua. I am so excited for the upcoming school year and can’t wait to welcome a new group of Canes!

Megan Howson
Majors: Marine Science and Biology
Minors: Chemistry, Psychology
Class: 2018
Email: mxh316@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Seahorse
My name is Megan Howson. I am from Sparta, NJ (the middle of nowhere), a junior majoring in Marine Science/Biology minoring in Psychology and Chemistry and a diehard Cheesehead. I am on the club swim team (I have been swimming since before I could walk and on a team since I was 5 years old) , part of Marine Mammal Rescue Club, a sister and philanthropy chair of Delta Delta Delta, and teach swim lessons at the pool. I want to do field research either in coral reef ecology or marine mammal behavior (probably marine mammal behavior).
Kristina Kaleel

**Majors:** Marine Science and Biology, Pre-Vet  
**Minors:** Chemistry  
**Class:** 2017  
**Email:** k.kaleel@umiami.edu  
**Favorite Marine Animal:** Green Sea Turtle

My name is Kristi Kaleel and I am going into my senior year of college at the University of Miami. I am a Marine Science and Biology major with a Chemistry minor on a Pre-Veterinary track. I grew up in a small town called Ocean Ridge right which is right outside of Boynton Beach, FL, so the ocean was pretty much my backyard. I LOVE being outdoors and around the water whether it is SCUBA diving, kayaking, paddle boarding, or just hanging out at the beach. Though a Florida native, I unfortunately do not surf except for my few attempts while studying abroad in the Galapagos where I stood on the board for about 3 seconds (I call that a success). I love being a marine science major at UM because there is so much that RSMAS offers for any field of interest. My personal passion lies with animals and I hope to pursue a career in veterinary medicine. I am the secretary of the Marine Mammal Rescue Team on campus and I assist in a lab at RSMAS that focuses on coral immunology. I am super excited for this 2016 summer because I will be a veterinary intern at Dolphins Plus in Key Largo (the Keys are definitely places to explore during your time here in Miami). I am excited to meet all of the new members of the Marine Science Community and look forward to an awesome year with you all!

**Fun Facts:** My favorite food is ice-cream and I am obsessed with the minions.

Benjamin Limer

**Majors:** Marine Science and Biology  
**Minors:** Chemistry, Meteorology  
**Class:** 2018  
**Email:** b.limer@miami.edu  
**Favorite Marine Animal:** Chimaera (the subclass of fish that contains ratfishes, a deep ocean fish that glides through the water on its pectoral fins)

Hi, my name is Ben Limer. I’ll be a junior in the fall studying marine science and biology. I will be pursuing the chemistry minor as well as a meteorology minor. I am doing research with Dr. Langdon, one of the professors at RSMAS who does coral research, and beginning in the fall, I will be working at the Early Life History Lab at the NOAA Southeast Fisheries Center. I have a dog named Teejay, I’m sarcastic all the time and I play a few instruments, such as French horn and trumpet; next semester I will do marching band.
Charlie Luisi
Majors: Marine Science and Applied Physics
Class: 2017
Email: c.luisi1@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Thresher Shark
Hey! I am Charles Luisi from Brewster, NY and I am a senior majoring in marine science and physics here at the [__]. I am the president of Rho Rho Rho, our Marine Science and Atmospheric Honor Society and a member of SCUBA Club and Marine Mammal Rescue Team. I was also part of E-Board for Ocean Awareness Week, which is a whole week devoted to appreciation for our oceans and how we affect it. These past three years at the University of Miami have been amazing due to awesome classes, shark tagging, swimming with dolphins, and meeting speakers that do work in the marine science field with actual networking opportunities! I cannot wait to meet all of you incoming students and share these great times and opportunities with you! See you in August!

Tamara Popovska
Majors: Marine Science and Biology
Minors: Chemistry and Math
Class: 2019
Email: tsp136@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Sea Otter
Hi guys, my name is Tamara Popovska, and I am from the northwest side of Chicago. I am a marine science and biology double major with chemistry and math minors. My summer will be spent working with the Shedd Aquarium to restore the beaches around Lake Michigan. Out of all the marine animals I love, my favorite would have to be the sea otter. I am so excited to meet you guys this upcoming fall!

Megan Pringle
Majors: Marine Science and Biology
Minors: Chemistry and Math
Class: 2018
Email: m.pringle@miami.edu
Favorite Marine Animal: Caribbean Reef Octopus
My name is Megan Pringle and I am a junior from Cranford, NJ. I’m majoring in marine science and biology with minors in chemistry and math. This summer I worked with South African penguins and harbor seals at Jenkinson’s Aquarium in Point Pleasant, NJ. I love spending time outdoors boating, kayaking, paddle boarding, and hiking.
Stefenie Shenoy  
**Majors:** Marine Science and Biology  
**Minors:** Chemistry and Math  
**Class:** 2017  
**Email:** sfs75@miami.edu  
**Favorite Marine Animal:** Manatee

My majors are Marine Science and Biology with minors in chemistry and mathematics. I’ve lived in 10 different cities and most recently moved here from Missouri. I spent the summer volunteering at Zoo Miami and diving around the Caribbean. My favorite marine animal is the manatee, but I also love my calico cat named Puppy.

Anchen Sun  
**Majors:** Marine Science and Computer Science  
**Class:** 2018  
**Email:** a.sun158@umiami.edu  
**Favorite Marine Animal:** Orca and Aplysia

Hello, my name is Anchen! My hometown is Nanjing, Jiangsu, China. My major is Marine Science and Computer Science. My hobbies include road tripping, photography, video games, and chess. This summer I will be working on a project with a professor at RSMAS and then going back to China to enjoy some delicious food.

Rachel Tammone  
**Majors:** Marine Affairs and Ecosystem Science and Policy  
**Class:** 2017  
**Email:** r.tammone@umiami.edu  
**Favorite Marine Animal:** Narwal

Hey everyone, I’d like to welcome you all to RSMAS! My name is Rachel Tammone and I’m currently a senior studying Marine Affairs and Ecosystem Science and Policy. I am from New York, but Miami has truly become my second home. Whether it’s studying, hiking, hanging at the beach, doing a clean up, or just enjoying the sunshine in a hammock, I love being outside. I’m a cookie butter, coffee, and avocado enthusiast! I know of all the best coffee shops and brunch places in town. On campus I’m involved with the scuba club, marine mammal stranding team, and Dance Marathon committee. I can’t wait to meet all of you and if you have any question please ask away!
**Ian Rick Thompson**  
**Majors:** Marine Science and Geology  
**Minors:** Biology and Math  
**Class:** 2017  
**Email:** i.thompson@umiami.edu  
**Favorite Marine Animal:** Horseshoe Crab  
Hello! My name is Rick Thompson, and I’m a senior majoring in marine science and geology! I came to UM from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, starting my career as a marine science/biology major, until I decided to switch after falling in love with the beautiful cave systems and aquifers of north Florida. Outside of class I am the Dive Safety Officer of the Scuba Club, and in the little time I’m not studying or diving, I am also involved in Rho Rho Rho and the Aquarium Club. I’ve had the opportunity to work in a couple of labs on campus and am currently working on a project examining past seawater chemistry from fossil corals with stable isotope proxies. I hope to have the opportunity to meet you in the Fall, either in my capacity as peer counselor or at Scuba Club!

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**Laura Thorton**  
**Majors:** Marine Science and Biology  
**Class:** 2018  
**Email:** lthorton@miami.edu  
**Favorite Marine Animal:** Flamingo Tongue Snail and Cownose Ray  
I’m a sophomore from Ponte Vedra Beach, FL majoring in marine science and biology. I am in a committed relationship with pizza and I am a student assistant for the Butler Center for Service and Leadership. This summer I am assisting with research in Abaco, Bahamas with sea turtles.

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**Jelly Vanderwoude**  
**Majors:** Marine Science and Geology  
**Minors:** Public Health  
**Class:** Fall 2017  
**Email:** lthorton@miami.edu  
**Favorite Marine Animal:** Sea Turtle  
Congrats on getting accepted to RSMAS! My name is Jelly Vanderwoude, and I’m a sophomore with majors in Marine Science and Geology and a minor in Public Health. I’m from Atlanta, a city not all that close to the ocean, but I was inspired to dedicate my life studying the oceans after attending Sail Caribbean, a camp for sailing, scuba diving, and ocean science. I currently conduct research on marine genomics at RSMAS, I’m an active member of Greek life, and you can usually find me napping in the Geology department in the basement of Cox. I will be spending my summer interning at Coastal Risk Consulting, a flood risk consulting company in Florida. If you have any questions about RSMAS or anything at all, feel free to reach out to me!
Carlisle Withers  
**Majors:** Marine Science and Chemistry  
**Minors:** Spanish  
**Class:** 2017  
**Email:** s.withers@umiami.edu  
**Favorite Marine Animal:** Giant Sun Fish  
My name is Carlisle Withers, and I am a junior at Miami and as a Peer Counselor my job is to help you transition into freshmen year and the RSMAS community. I am from Atlanta, GA and grew up spending summers in the panhandle of Florida, which made me realize that college at the beach would be the best thing ever. I am double majoring in Chemistry and Marine Science along with a Spanish minor. I have loved going beyond a science major by using my Spanish to enjoy Miami as a fantastic international city. I have loved studying chemistry at UM because RSMAS offers real world applications for what we learn in class. Spring semester of my freshmen, I began volunteering in a Marine Chemistry lab at RSMAS that focused on the deep-water flow in the Gulf of Mexico and natural carbon seeps influence on water chemistry. Working in the lab gave me perspective on how modern research is done. The summer following my Sophomore year I worked for NOAA for a month and a half out at sea on the Eastern Ocean Acidification research cruise (ECOA) aboard the R/V Gordon Gunter! This year, as a Junior, I have been branching outside of the research realm and starting working part time for a chemical company in business management and sales. I don't think I could have had a better experience academically (and socially) so far at Miami and I want all of y'all to have the same experience! Besides RSMAS, I love to play golf on the weekends and enjoy exploring the various cuisines Miami has to offer and am a proud member of Zeta Tau Alpha. Please feel free to contact me by email or Facebook!

Andrea Wright  
**Majors:** Marine Science and Geology  
**Minors:** Computer Science  
**Class:** 2019  
**Email:** amw174@miami.edu  
**Favorite Marine Animal:** Manatee, because nothing is as cute as a sea cow  
I am a sophomore originally from Madison, Wisconsin. I'm majoring in marine science and geology with a minor in computer science. I am a member of the Marine Mammal Rescue Team, the model UN team, and student government here at Miami. In my free time I love listening to music and watching any and all movies.