Welcome all incoming and prospective students! As the Peer Counselors, we would like to introduce you to both life as a student at the University of Miami and the Rosenstiel School for Marine and Atmospheric Science (RSMAS). Incoming students are placed with a Peer Counselor who will help them make the transition to 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.

**JULIA PAINE, Co-Head of Peer Counselor Program**

**Majors:** Marine Science, Chemistry, Bassoon Performance  
**Minors:** Math  
**Class:** 2016  
**Email:** j.paine1@umiami.edu

Hello! My name is Julia Paine, originally from Chicago. I am majoring in Marine Science/Chemistry and Music Performance going into my senior year. It takes some manipulation, but I find that there is always time to enjoy other interests be they SCUBA Club, peer counseling, chamber ensembles, outreach programs, etc. Last summer, I studied river geochemistry in New York and traveled to Haiti for fieldwork! And this summer, I’m in Colorado working on an internship through NOAA programing a concentrated solar power tower to include a nationwide high-voltage DC transmission optimization. But in terms of Miami, I encourage everyone to take advantage of where we are located. This means camping, diving, eating, researching, and listening to music of all sorts. We get the Cleveland Orchestra, the Festival of Miami, and ULTRA. The possibilities are limitless. Feel free to shoot me an email with questions and remember to absorb the sunshine and bring out a smile. You chose an incredible school and we cannot wait to meet you!

**MEGAN FRASER, Co-Head of Peer Counselor Program**

**Majors:** Marine Science, Biology  
**Minors:** Chemistry, Spanish  
**Class:** 2016  
**Email:** m.fraser1@umiami.edu

Hello and welcome to all! My name is Megan Fraser and I am a Senior here at UM, pursuing the Marine Science and Biology track, with minors in Chemistry and Spanish. I am originally from West Chester, Pennsylvania (suburb of Philadelphia) but always knew that my love of the sea would take me South. Throughout my time
at RSMAS I have worked with a graduate student in Dr. Baker’s Coral Reef Conservation lab on one of his graduate student’s work related to corals and climate change; with Dr. Smith on inventory in her plankton lab; and for the past two years, on research projects with Dr. Schmale on his lab’s work of a virus-like agent seen in bicolor damselfish of the Florida reef tracts. In addition to research, I have been involved in Rho Rho Rho, SCUBA Club, Category 5 Sport Spirit Programming Board, a womens’ music fraternity and in one of our school’s female choirs. Most importantly, I have served as a RSMAS peer counselor for 3 years because sharing what’s going on in the marine science community is critical to keeping our oceans healthy and thriving. Coming to RSMAS was without a doubt the best decision I could have made. I know that all of the new freshmen will grow to love it as deeply as we all do! Please feel free to email me or call me with any questions.

SAMANTHA SHEDD

Majors: Marine Science, Biology
Minors: Microbiology
Class: 2017
Email: nolashef3121@miami.edu

My name is Samantha Shedd. I am a sophomore at UM in the marine science department. I am majoring in Marine Science and Biology and minoring in Microbiology. I am from New Orleans, LA. At home, I volunteered at the Audubon aquarium of the Americas for three years. At school, I am in the marine science honor society (Rho Rho Rho), the SCUBA Club, and the Marine Mammal Stranding Team. I love to be involved and go on all the trips with the clubs. This summer, I am working in Key West with Reef Relief running a summer coral camp and helping maintain the Florida Keys Marine Park.

CARLISLE WITHERS

Majors: Marine Science, Chemistry
Minors: Spanish
Class: 2017
Email: s.withers@umiami.edu

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. During my first two years, I have already seen how chemistry is vital to understanding issues such as climate change, carbon and nutrient cycling, radioactive isotope tracers, and general chemical oceanography. Spring semester of my freshmen year, 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 following summer and into my sophomore year I continued helping Marine Chemistry graduate students work towards their PhDs. I focused on Dissolved Organic Carbon in the Black Sea and continued research on nutrients in the Gulf of Mexico. As I write this now, I am currently off the coast of Nova
Scotia on the Eastern Ocean Acidification research cruise (ECOA) aboard the R/V Gordon Gunter! I am collecting and analyzing dissolved oxygen to better understand the carbonate chemistry. My goal as a Peer Counselor is to get freshmen more involved in research and connected to professors at RSMAS since there are so many opportunities available at UM, especially for Chemistry majors. 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!

GRACIE SNYDER
Majors: Marine Science, Biology
Minors: Chemistry
Class: 2017
Email: g.snyder2@umiami.edu

Hey! I’m Gracie Snyder, from the middle of nowhere in Illinois, and am a junior at the U. I’m another Marine Science/Biology major with a minor in Chemistry and I came here for the fantastic undergrad program and diversity of campus life. I live and breathe for my research internship at Dr. Andrew Baker’s coral lab here at RSMAS where one of his graduate students acts as my research mentor. I am currently looking into space competition between various hard and soft coral species that are relevant here in the Florida Keys. I will write my senior thesis on this project and the ones that stem from it during the rest of my time here. I just finished a UM course on research techniques for SCUBA diving and am now a trained science diver. I usually spend the remainder of my time being active in the Aquarium Club and playing soccer and dodgeball. Next summer I will spend several weeks with the Science Under Sail expeditions sailing around the Bahamas coast working on coral reefs and learning new research methods. After graduation, I plan to dive right into graduate school and continue my education in all things marine and especially coral! I am so excited for all of you starting your college years and please don’t hesitate to email me any questions or just to say hello!

GEOFFREY CALDERONE
Majors: Marine Science, Biology
Minors: Chemistry, Spanish, Public Health
Class: 2018
Email: gkc2@miami.edu

Hey guys! My name is Geoffrey Calderone and I'm a sophomore here majoring in Marine Science and Biology with minors in Chemistry, Spanish, and Public Health. On campus, I'm involved in Rho Rho Rho, the SCUBA Club, and am the captain of the Co-Ed Competitive Sailing Team. Research-wise, last year I volunteered on two separate week-long NOAA cruises on the Walton Smith around the Florida Keys, worked in the Larval Transport Lab at RSMAS with Dr. Paris, and look forward to starting an internship at NOAA AOML's Coral Reef Lab this semester. I look forward to a great year!
GRACE ROSKAR

Majors: Marine Science, Biology
Minors: Chemistry
Class: 2016
Email: a.roskar@umiami.edu

Hey everyone! My name is Grace Roskar. I grew up in Texas and am currently a senior majoring in Marine Science and Biology with a minor in Chemistry. Last fall, I studied abroad in Australia and absolutely loved it, and I cannot wait to go back. At UM I do research with Dr. Sealey in the Coastal Ecology Lab, studying changes in diversity on near-shore coral reefs in the Bahamas, and am currently working on my senior thesis. As an Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholar, this past summer I had an internship with NOAA in North Carolina, evaluating Southeast Fishery-Independent Survey videos for Atlantic sharks, and was fortunate enough to participate on a research diving cruise in the Tortugas Ecological Reserve off Key West. I am a member of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority, UM SCUBA Club, and Rho Rho Rho Marine and Atmospheric Honor Society. In the past, I was on the executive board of UM Dance Marathon and was the RSMAS Senator for UM Student Government. I love running, sailing, and scuba diving. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you might have, even if it is before we meet at orientation! I can’t wait to meet you all and help you have the best possible freshman year!

AMANDA MIKALIAN

Majors: Marine Science, Biology
Class: 2016
Email: a.mikalian@umiami.edu

Hi! My name is Amanda Mikalian, and I will be a Peer Counselor in the Marine Science school for this year! I am here to answer any and all questions you may have, and to try to make your transition to school a bit easier. Feel free to ask me anything, marine science related or not, and hopefully your transition into UM will be as fun as mine was! I am a senior double majoring in Marine Science and Biology. Originally I am from a small town outside Chicago, Illinois. It might not seem obvious why a girl who grew up surrounded by corn would care about the oceans, but I started traveling to the beach when I was just an infant and always knew this is what I wanted to do. Although I am not sure exactly what field of marine biology I want to go into, I am very interested in coral research and marine biomedical research. Outside of class, I spend my time interning in a coral research lab at RSMAS. I have also been involved with the Aplysia lab, as well conducting an independent, funded research project of serpent stars, *Ophioderma appressum*, on which I hope to publish soon. I am involved in a lot of UM organizations including SCUBA Club, Aquarium Club, and Rho Rho Rho as well as being very involved in Greek life on campus as a sister of Delta Delta Delta. Basically my point is there are a million ways to be involved, and I want to encourage you to take full advantage of your opportunity here at UM! I look forward to meeting you all! Miami is a great school and a super fun environment to live in. I would love to know more about you: Where are you from? Why did you choose UM? Do you know what you want to study? Please contact me with any questions you have or even just to say hello!
JULIA COMEAU
Majors: Marine Affairs, Economics
Class: 2017
Email: j.comeau@umiami.edu

Hi guys, welcome to RSMAS! My name is Julia Comeau and I am a junior studying Marine Affairs and Economics at RSMAS. I am originally from Connecticut and did my first semester of college in London, England. I love getting involved in school and was a lifeguard at the school pool for two years, a member of Sigma Delta Tau sorority, a member of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity, and a part of the SCUBA Club. I am a certified Rescue Diver and would love one day to become a Master Scuba Diver. Over spring break, I took a course with RSMAS where we sailed around the Dominican Republic and got to see humpback whales, dolphins, turtles, and we were able to explore the beautiful national park of Los Haitises. RSMAS offers a ton of courses like that one that you can choose to get involved in. I can’t wait to meet all of you and show you around our beautiful campus both in Coral Gables and Key Biscayne. You will fall in love with UM, just like I have! See you in August!

CHELSEA CURRIE
Majors: Marine Science, Biology
Minors: Chemistry, Public Health, Microbiology/Immunology
Class: 2016
Email: c.currie4@umiami.edu

Hi guys! My name is Chelsea Currie and I am a senior studying Marine Science/Biology. I am completing minors in Chemistry, Public Health, and Microbiology/Immunology and am mainly interested in Marine Biomedicine. I am currently president of Rho Rho Rho: The Marine and Atmospheric Science Honor Society and have also been involved in SCUBA Club. Previously I worked in the Aplysia Hatchery across the street from RSMAS and I am currently working in a hospital’s clinical laboratory. As a native South Floridian I am happy to welcome you to Miami as to the ‘Canes family!
**MIKE CONNELLY**  
**Majors:** Marine Science, Biology, Chemistry  
**Class:** 2016  
**Email:** 14connellym@gmail.com

Hello everyone, and welcome to Miami! My name is Mike Connelly, and I’m a senior from Moorestown, New Jersey, majoring in Marine Science, Biology and Chemistry. My interests include coral reef ecology, captive aquaculture, and disease processes in reef fishes and corals. I’m extremely excited to meet all the new students joining the Hurricanes family in August! I’m involved with UMAC, or the UM Aquarium Club on campus, and would highly recommend any new students interested in keeping aquariums in their dorm to join. We’ve hosted plenty of speakers and taken trips to the Mote Marine Lab, Georgia Aquarium, and Shedd Aquarium in the past two years. I also recommend the UM SCUBA Club to any divers, as South Florida is home to some amazing reefs and wrecks. I also love running and biking throughout Miami, and am an avid supporter of UM football, basketball, and baseball! Again, I’m really looking forward to meeting all the incoming students, and to helping as many people as possible get settled in academically. Please feel free to email or message me, I really do enjoy talking to new people! (P.S. My favorite marine animal is the Cherub Angelfish, *Centropyge argi*)

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**BREANNA ALDRED**  
**Majors:** Marine Science, Biology  
**Minors:** Chemistry, Biochemistry  
**Class:** 2018  
**Email:** breannaalldred@yahoo.com

My name is Breanna Aldred and I am a marine science peer counselor at the University of Miami! I am here to respond to any questions, comments, or concerns you have before you arrive on campus and throughout the school year. I will be a sophomore on the PreMedical Track majoring in Marine Science and Biology and minoring in Chemistry and Biochemistry. I’m originally from Waukesha, Wisconsin. Although Wisconsin doesn’t exactly border any marine ecosystems, I have always loved the ocean and became interested in Marine Science when I became Scuba certified when I was 10. I am part of the Honor Program at The U and I am involved in many clubs and organizations. I am an avid member of Rho Rho Rho, the Marine and Atmospheric Science Honor Society. I am also involved in the SCUBA Club, Beta Beta Beta (the Biological Honor Society), Alpha Lambda Delta (an honor society) and the American Medical Student Association. I am also a dancer and the Treasurer for the Miami Motion Dance Team. Last semester, I was involved in research at the RSMAS campus working in the National Resource for Aplysia (aplysia are a type of sea slug) and I plan to continue my research there in the fall. I look forward to meeting you in August, but in the meantime I’d like to get to know you, so if you could send me a reply I would appreciate it! Do you have any questions about the University, moving in, classes, or extracurricular activities? Why did you decide to attend UM and what do you want to study? What other activities do you enjoy doing? And what is your favorite and least favorite marine organism (My favorite is the cuttlefish and my least favorite are bloodworms 😊)? Feel free to contact me via email, call/text, or Facebook!
RICK THOMPSON
Majors: Marine Science, Geology
Class: 2016
Email: i.thompson1@umiami.edu

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 president 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 coral skeleton 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!

SARAH MICHALAK
Majors: Marine Science, Biology
Minors: Chemistry, Psychology
Class: 2017
Email: sarahrmichalak@gmail.com

Hi everyone! My name Sarah Michalak and I am a junior majoring in Marine Science and Biology and minoring in Chemistry and Psychology on the pre-vet track. I am originally from the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan, but I moved down to Tampa with my family the summer after I graduated high school. I love all things about marine science and the ocean, especially sea turtles, marine mammals, sharks, and sea birds. My plan is to attend veterinary school after graduating from UM to fulfill my lifelong dream of becoming a vet! Here at the U I am the secretary of Rho Rho Rho Marine and Atmospheric Science Honor Society, and I am a member of the pre-vet society, the SCUBA Club, and Miami Motion dance team. I have had various internships working under veterinarians with all sorts of animals. My most recent position is a summer internship at Clearwater Marine Aquarium in the sea turtle rehabilitation department. My time here at UM has been absolutely amazing so far and I can’t wait to see all the great things the next couple years have to offer. I am very excited to be a peer counselor this fall and I can’t wait to meet all of you!
LEAH CHOMIAK
Majors: Marine Science, Chemistry, Meteorology
Class: 2017
Email: l.chomiak1@umiami.edu

Hey you - Welcome to the []_[]!! My name is Leah Chomiak and I am a junior at UM studying Marine Chemistry and Meteorology. I am from Frederick, Maryland and have been pursuing my dream of being a marine scientist since the age of four! I am an avid scuba diver, I have an obsession with sharks, and I just picked up a new hobby of sailing! I recently completed a semester abroad program through SEA, where my fellow shipmates and I sailed across the South Pacific Ocean on a brigantine vessel conducting oceanographic research! It was hands-down the best experience of my life! At UM, I participate in SCUBA Club and the Aquarium Club, I play on the competitive club tennis team, and I volunteer in Dr. Hansell’s Chemical Oceanography Lab over at RSMAS. This year I hope to start my own research project using some samples I collected while I was at sea! I am super excited to meet you guys, and please reach out to me if you have any questions! I’d love to hear from you! :)

CHARLES LUISI
Majors: Marine Science, Physics
Class: 2017
Email: c.luisi@umiami.edu

Hey! I am Charles Luisi from Brewster, NY and I am a junior majoring in marine science and physics here at the [__]. I am the vice 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 two 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!