

MASTERS OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES

## EVSS ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT: MIRANDA DZIOBAK

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Photo: Sarasota Dolphin Research Program

Alumna Miranda Dziobak earned her bachelor's in biochemistry at the University of Toledo and her master's in environmental and sustainability studies at the College. After finishing her master's thesis on dolphin ecotoxicology in Spring 2021, her next step is starting the Environmental Health Sciences PhD program at USC in Fall 2021. This PhD program is the "perfect fit" for Miranda, as it focuses on "the adverse effects of environmental conditions or contamination on human health and the impacts of human activities on the environment (USC Columbia)."

The EVSS program was integral to this step toward doctorate studies because it connected to her advisor, Dr. Leslie Hart. She will continue to conduct research with Dr. Hart at USC. Her PhD research will continue her master's thesis work on "understanding phthalate contamination in bottlenose dolphins using urine samples to quantify exposure." She will investigate other avenues to observe chemicals from

plastics (phthalates) in dolphins through other methodologies that sample "blubber, feces, and gastric fluid, correlating gut microplastic contents with detectable phthalate metabolite concentrations." This work will investigate "what marine phthalate contamination looks like and resultant effects," and make this methodology applicable to more locations and species.

Through her academic experience, Miranda has developed a "toolbox of research methodologies." Her experience in her undergraduate studies and master's thesis refined her chemistry skills. During her PhD, she hopes to expand her research methods toolbox to build on her biological training. She plans to gain new experience

in a mammalian research laboratory. Miranda chose to pursue a PhD to continue her research scientist career aspirations in environmental science.

*All quotes from Miranda Dziobak, unless otherwise credited.*



*Pictured above and below: Miranda Dziobak processing samples in the field.*

