

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Jeffrey Good, Indonesia, Marine Science

It is ironic how someone born and raised in the steel jungle of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania has decided to pursue a career revolving around the pristine ocean located many miles away. Surrounded by daily monotony among disheveled city dwellers, I longed for an adventure into a new world filled with sights both strange and breathtaking. While growing up, my father told tantalizing stories of ocean heroes like Captain Nemo and Jacques Cousteau, and monsters like the mysterious giant squid. These tales of an unexplored realm revealed to me not only the mesmerizing and adventurous world of the ocean, but so too the world of science.

My childhood dreams of marine science would form into a more scientific focus when my aunt was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. While pursuing my nerdy hobby of studying cephalopods such as squids, cuttlefish and octopuses, I learned of a potential medical link between the myelinated axons under attack in my aunt's nervous system and the unmyelinated axons cephalopods. Could cephalopod neurology potentially have human medical application? I came to understand the power of the sea in the lives of people.

Through my studies, I constantly pursued my quest of having a career in marine science. Year after year, I sought science courses and activities like swimming and rowing that would bring me closer to the water and the animals that lay beneath its surface. Eventually, I excitedly left my Pittsburgh home to attend Eckerd College on the Florida Gulf Coast, where I've found a fitting niche. At this magnificent school, I have had a plethora of opportunities to develop my interests and gain marketable skills for a career in marine science. I have been fortunate to work on the water in numerous marine science classes and labs, work alongside professors with their professional research, and even join a rigorous search and rescue team where I learned proper seamanship and emergency response medicine. My science classes are often challenging, though through these toils, I've found value in its application to real life. I am confident that I could excel in applying my skills and knowledge in the lab and field environment.

In my junior year, I was awarded the highly competitive NOAA Holling's Scholarship and was invited to undertake fulltime research this past summer the Center for Coastal Health and Biomolecular Research in South Carolina. I spearheaded frontline research of the effects that oil dispersants have on larval and juvenile clams. My colleagues and I hoped to understand the toxic effects on these animals and the important economic and ecological implications. Through this hard work, I am gratified to have become a trained ecotoxicologist with skill in biomarker assays and field methods. I produced quality results ready for publication and presented my findings to the public at the NOAA headquarters in Maryland. Consequently, I am no stranger to the rigors of science and revel in its challenges.

I recently expanded my horizons of science and adventure to the far distant Pacific islands of Micronesia for an intensive three week college course. I was ignited with enthusiasm to learn about the ties between the Yapese culture and the sea and to see the pristine reefs of the Indo-Pacific. Three weeks was not enough; I yearn to travel back to the Pacific to continue my education scientifically and culturally.

Now it is my senior year, and I am eager to face the real world outside of college and to continue in ecotoxicology. I am tantalized by what I've heard from those at Eckerd that have worked there: a new, alluring and substantive opportunity to continue ecotoxicology research in Indonesia with the reputable Dr. Budi Widianarko, professor of food technology and environmental science. This offers invaluable experience to pursue my passion of ecotoxicology, work in a rich foreign scientific community, and to discover Indonesian culture and language. It has been a long and rewarding road from growing up in Pittsburgh, and I am prepared for the continuing hard work on my journey to a doctorate in the field I love so much. My educational, scientific, and cultural experiences with this Fulbright Scholarship will allow me to create my own stories and odysseys like those about which my father told me. My name is Jeff Good, and my adventure has just begun.