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Women in Marine Science Transcript Episode 2 – Conversation with Science Staff

Delaina: My name is Delaina and I work for Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program as the Migratory Birds Coordinator. I started working, oh gosh, back in 2007 just as a summer, summertime projects and so that's, what, 14 years I've been doing research.

Lauren: So my name is Lauren Brown, I am a Postdoctoral Research Associate and I work in Brian Roberts' lab looking at a project that is studying oiling effects on salt marshes.

Paige: My name's Paige Clarizia, I am the Lab Manager for the Brian Roberts' lab. I am also I'm the Project Manager for the BOEM Ship Shoal project that Ryan, Brian is working on right now. I recently got my masters from the University of New Hampshire in Earth Sciences and Biogeochemical Cycling.

Angel: My name's Angel Casillo, I am a Research Assistant under Abigail Bockus. We focus on fish physiology, focus on aquaculture species. I got my first bachelor's from LSU in something completely different, it was a Bachelor of Fine Arts and then I got my second bachelor's in Natural Resource Ecology and Management also from LSU in 2014. So I've only been working in the field for a year.

Stephanie: My name is Stephanie Plaisance and I also work for Brian Roberts' lab. I'm a Research Assistant II and I've been working at LUMCON for two years in April.

Murt: Into the questions: We're gonna to start with probably the easiest one for you, which is, what led you to a career in science?

Lauren: So I actually started my education thinking that I was going to major in English and work as a creative writer, so I would say what led me to science is telling cool stories. I stopped doing my homework for all of my English classes and only was doing the reading for my science courses because those were the stories that I found most interesting and I think, I think the excitement of finding a brand new story in science, finding something that no one, someone has never known before and being able to tell that story, that's, that's why I want to be a scientist.

Angel: So I started off my college career wanting to be a veterinarian and I got a job in the Admissions Office at LSU vet school and found out that that was not what I wanted to do. But, I've always wanted to help animals, so trying to figure out a way to help animals on a larger scale 'cause you could volunteer at shelters and stuff like that, but I wanted to make a big difference. Which led me to the photography degree in art 'cause I thought I was going to be a photojournalist for an animal rights organization. But, after being out of school for about a year

and not really knowing what I wanted to do, still, I found LSU's Renewable Natural Resources Program and I was like, "Oh wow! Like, this sounds like something I want to do!" So it was my drive to help animals on a larger scale and protect the environment and stuff that led me to a career in science.

Paige: I actually didn't want to originally be in science, or I didn't know that I wanted to be in science. My dad, my, a lot of people in my family are in law enforcement; my dad's a detective so he always came home with really cool stories and I, that's what I thought I wanted to do. So, when the time came to go to college I was like, "I'm gonna go into law enforcement" and my dad said, "No you're not. You're gonna to try something else, try an interest do something else, then you can always switch" and so, I kind of reflected on what I wanted to do, and I grew up in the Northeast so I constantly was hiking, and backpacking, and fishing, and kayaking, and I have a true love for the outdoors, and I've always been one of those people that have asked "why?" Why things are the way they are? Why, you know, do things die off in the winter and what happens? And so, I guess that was my start, to pursuing a degree in science, is just understanding the "whys" of this world and why things happen the way they do. And now I am here two degrees later and studying more "whys" I guess.

Stephanie: So, I was kind of like Angel, I actually started college in Photography as well. Didn't really go where I wanted to with that, I didn't get a degree in it or anything, and it took me a few years before I went back to school, but when I finally did, I decided to do Environmental Science 'cause, kind of like Paige, I always had an interest in being outside and doing outdoor things. I kind of fell into it; I started in a community college 'cause I did really bad in high school, so I couldn't get into a university until I, you know, re-took some stuff. Then I ended up going to Louisiana Tech where my husband went and, I don't know, I just really fell in love with science, which is something I didn't expect but, it happened.

Delaina: The simple answer is art; I ended up with a career in science because of art. I went, I have an undergrad in Art and a Master's degree in Art. However, art is what brought me to coastal Louisiana and brought me to a workshop at LUMCON called Coastal Landscape Photography and it was, it changed my life, *snaps* just like that. 'Cause we were, we had a science person, we had an artist, so we were working with a photographer and with someone who's teaching us about, you know, this is when you're walking through this marsh grass, see this, this periwinkle. You know, so I's learning about all these amazing things that, one are, 'cause in learning about land loss and this was, what, in 2004 I think, somewhere around there. I remember one of the first trips, we would be dropped off on islands, go out photograph and just be back on the boat for this time. The first place we stopped was a small spot and it had a bunch of traps, crab traps, and there were birds trapped at the bottom, and I was already, with art, I was already doing artwork with birds. We released birds, it was an amazing experience, I'd never had a wild bird in the hand. I carried, one of them was dead, I carried it around with me all day, I just was fascinated; and then just being in this coastal environment where you have washed up man-made stuff, they're just so much visually stimulating in that environment, and then learning about processes along the way, started come, feeding into artwork that I was producing at the time. I ended up working in the, in this, I guess, it became my career because I

started volunteering for the organization I now work for; I would go out and volunteer and just show up and, and I learned about, and that's when I started looking into going into grad school and I considered science, and a lot of people said, "You're an artist. You should just do art, just do art and not do science." So I do, I didn't have one person that said I should do science, but I was asking people, "Should I do science (I'm loving this) or art?" and not one person said, "Yeah science." But I do, got to do it anyway, so.

Angel: It's really crazy how art and science are intertwined, like you think about it, and people always say that one side of the brain is more artsy and one side of the brain is more sciency, but the fact that a few of us, kind of, go hand-in-hand, like we've done both. [multiple people speaking at once] It's really interesting.

Delaina: I think too, even, writing, I, I know one of the partners I work with, he was, he, he, he has an undergraduate degree in Writing and it's like that, that pursuit too, that creativity, I think, really feeds. I think most scientists are not just scientists they play music, they draw, they write, it's, I think that's part of being a scientist.

Paige: I remember when my favorite memories of being in grad school, actually this doesn't really have much to do my research, even though I loved it, this has nothing to do with that, but there was this amazing artist who came and put up a display and there were different features and things, but my favorite one was, it almost looked like a wind chime going across and there was all of these little glass vials, and they were all hanging at different lengths, and each of those vials had a bit of melted water from this ice core, the longest ice core record that they have in the world, and the graph, the length that the core hung at, was in the shape of, like the CO₂ emissions over time. It was amazing and it, just blowing in the wind it made a really cool noise too, it was, it was really beautiful. So it always amazes me how much art and science can relate.

Murt: Do you think having a background that didn't necessarily start in science, has that actually helped you become a better scientist?

Angel: I think it has, 'cause a lot of the experiences that I had in art, we had a lot of visiting artists and a lot of, a lot of their things had science in it, like Paige said, that project she was talking about, and it also does help because I was on that side of, like the civilian side, like not really understanding science and then learning the other half of it, it, I think it kind of helped me become a better communicator to people who aren't in the science community.

Lauren: I think I'll go off that, you know, science is, in its ideal form, or whatever, idealized form, it is a very rigid way of communicating. We have our, you know, introduction, methods, results, conclusions, but that's not the way that most humans actually communicate. So I think, going back to what Angel was saying is it's finding different ways to express that is so key for making science actually count.

Paige: I think too, going off what Lauren said, I think a lot of, you can have a lot of careers where you can go to your job, and you can sit down at a desk, and you can do your job but you know, not

necessarily have a lot of passion for it, but science I think because of the communication, the way that things work in scientists and how their mind works, I feel like there's a lot of passion behind a lot of scientists, I think the reason why they're doing it is because they like it not because they have to have a paycheck. I think it takes more drive to be a scientist. Yeah, you have to really have a passion and a liking for the things that you do, otherwise it's hard to come to work.

Delaina: I think too for, for me coming from an art background, you have to be disciplined, you have to problem-solve, you have to show up in so many different ways that certainly have benefited me working in science.

Murt: The landscape of science and people who do science has, historically has looked one way and we are slowly seeing changes in what that landscape looks like, but slower than other disciplines may be. Given that, sometimes it's really hard for people, especially women, to consider careers in science, personally, have any of you encountered any challenges or skeptics to you wanting to do science as a profession?

Delaina: I think my biggest thing was, like I already said, where I was not encouraged to do science from people when I asked, "Hey I'm really excited about this" and they thought I fit into this spot and they didn't want me to be something else. But I also even from your, you know, family life, I remember being so excited about being on an island and having an experience, and I was trying to tell my mother about it, but she said, "Stop, you're scaring me!" Whatever I was, you know, the adventure part, which was exciting to me, was scary to her and she just wanted to know what we ate. You know, so it's, I guess so, not having support with family, they just, they had art, every, people had already defined me a certain way and I'm not, I think, I think that maybe women have that happen to them more often.

Lauren: I think, not only in, in the way that other people define you but in the way that you define you is, is what has been the biggest challenge for me; is no one has directly told me you can't do this, or it's too dangerous for you, I've luckily been very supported in my career, but it took me a long time to be able to say, "I am a scientist" and to believe that. Because I came at it from a, from a creative point and I was always the, the English major and I studied French and it took me a while to go from, "I want to tell science stories" to "I am a scientist."

Stephanie: I feel similar to Lauren where I never had anyone tell me I couldn't do it whenever I decided that's what I wanted, but I did have some skeptics in high school. My mother was a teacher at my high school, like my whole life, and when I was a senior, the counselor, she had a conversation with my mom and like I said, I did terrible in high school, like I just gave up, like I was like, "I'm going to go to art school, don't need any of this" and this might be a little exaggerated 'cause it's been years since I've been in high school, but she basically told my mom I wasn't going anywhere with my life, and I never forgot that. It's, that's probably the one thing that ever brought me down, and I had several other teachers that were kinda the same way, but whenever I decided I was going to do science, nobody, everyone was like, "Yeah you can do it" and that was nice to have supportive people by that time in my life.

Angel: I think my biggest challenge, 'cause I, I had kinda the opposite experience, my biggest hesitation with my family support was like, "Oh Angel, you already have \$30,000 in student loan debt you sure you want to go back to school?" and I was like, "Yeah! Whatever! I'll go back to school" and they're all like, "Ok!" but my hardest part was finding the right degree program because LSU's RNR program isn't very well advertised and I feel like, personally, if I had known more about it back when I was getting my art degree, I probably would have switched, but yeah. The whole program there was very supportive.

Murt: Do we alter our behaviors so that we are seen more as equals, as scientists, to our male counterparts? So, I just kind of wanted to, to pick your brains about that in, in your life as a scientist.

Delaina: I think I had answered, sometimes if I, I think the, the issues may be running into people that aren't in science. So when I first started doing fieldwork, I would have the backpack with my hydrating tube and I would have so I'd, I'd have a lot of gear because I had to collect samples and stuff, so when I was going out I would, maybe some people, I was on, in Port Fourchon, so that's, you know, where a lot of oil people are getting off work, starting work, and so sometimes I had to be very careful with, if I was going out by myself, I was very weary, I had some spray if I needed to protect myself, and I was always scared that the wind would be blowing and I would blow it in my face, but I had to, I had to be careful 'cause you know, you want to engage with people but you have you, your work to do and so I, often times when I feel that I have to change how I am by reading a situation, especially with people that aren't in science. Certainly, it happens in science too, to a smaller degree, where maybe I'm dismissed easily or I'm in charge of something, but the person that I have, who I've trained, who's next to me and is a male, is automatically they, the person doesn't even talk to me, they talk to the other person. So, and in that case I, I actually had a conversation with a person that was with me and, "Hey, this is something that can change in the future. We, we need to just keep redirecting this person so that they are talking to the person that's really in charge." And it's difficult too, you don't, you know, I think women, there are stigmas: you can't, you're, are you gonna be too bossy? And I've certainly dealt with trying to direct; I've had situations where I direct groups of people and have been, some people are no, there's no problem with it, they accept that I'm that person and other people, sometimes, have taken some offense because I'm directing and, and I, I have to let them know it's not personal, that I am directing them where they need to be because this is part of the job, so that can be problematic. I think that, I don't know that there's any way out of that because when you're dealing with groups of people, everyone comes with where they are, and I think in the beginning I used to be hurt 'cause you, you know, I wanted everyone to like me but now I'm like, "I can't take it personally" because everyone is where they are and so that's about them, it's not about me, I'm just trying to get a job done.

Lauren: I'll definitely agree with that. I, I've ended up in lots of rooms or lots of field situations where it's, it's all men and I'm my little 5 foot 2 female trying to be in charge and tell everybody where to go, and I think my biggest fear was that they wouldn't listen to me. But I never really

encountered that, it was I, I was lucky enough to be supported, that I was able to take that role, but it's the little comments, the push back against, oh you know, "Look how Lauren's always having to tell people what to do" and you know, "She's bossing her advisor around" and, and it's, it said in, as a joke but it does get to you and you have to get over being the one who's different in the group, and, and tell yourself that, "No, that's the role that you're doing and you're doing it because you're meant to be the leader in that situation." So it takes a little bit of, of self talk to get yourself past your own doubts and some of the comments that are made.

Paige: I'll agree with Lauren exactly on that point, that I feel like, there's been times when I have a male boss or a male group of people who are, you know a little up the chain than I am but I don't agree with them, there's a decision that's being made or, or a tactic that I think that would work better, and it takes talking to myself, being like, "You know just throw out the idea, what's, what's the worst that's going to happen?" to actually have myself feel confident enough to do so and speak out, and even if they don't agree, and even if they're just like, you know, "We're not gonna do that" just being proud of myself for taking that step and I feel like I've learned that more over the years, especially being in science for so long and now, I mean, we joke about it in my, in my lab, but I'm kind of like the one that is like, "Ah, I don't think that's right. I think we should do something different" and we have a male boss and I have no problem telling him like, "I think there's a different way to go about this." but it took a long time for me to get here, definitely.

Angel: I think my lack of experiences like that is just coming from my lack of experience in the field; like I work with Abigail and it's just the two of us in our lab. But there was a scenario: I went to a Louisiana Professional Biologist meeting and I presented my undergraduate research there, and I think it was mostly me being hard on myself because I wasn't super confident in the way that I presented my research. So, nobody said anything to me directly but, I was always kind of questioning like, "Did I come off confident enough?" like, "Do I look okay?" like, "Are they gonna respect me or are they just gonna, kind of, tossed me aside 'cause I'm young or female or not dressed appropriately?" So I think it was mostly just myself freaking myself out about the whole scenario.

Delaina: I want to say that I, you looked familiar to me, 'cause I think I was at that meeting and so I didn't think anyone came off not looking professional, you did a good job.

Angel: Thanks! I was the last one of the day and my presentation, I was so nervous I sped through it and it took four minutes.

Delaina: I'd also like to add too, that that I've, I'm not sure, I guess when we have these things coming at us, something that's helped me is I've had a partner, that I work with, he's out of Texas, and it's really just super encouraging and makes me feel like everything I do in that position, because I think there's you know, with the COVID situation, potentially we might try to do some work and effort in January, I'm not sure that's going to happen, but he's essentially said, you know, "I can, I can, you need to be a part of this" and so when someone gives me that

feedback, I know that everything, all that work, is productive and important and it makes me feel like, it gives, adds some validity.

Paige: I had a really amazing Master's advisor, she was my undergrad advisor, but she, I would always, I was very open with her and I would always express to her like, "Oh, I'm feeling this way or this way" or she would ask me like, "Oh, why didn't you ask that question?" or "Why didn't you do that?" and she was always so amazing at just the positive reinforcement, the "your voice matters, your opinion matters," like this is how science continues, this is how science furthers is, like all these questions that young scientists have, old scientists have, like just, like the collaborations. So it's really, it was really important, I think, in my young scientist career to have her and her network that she created. I guess I feel like she gave a lot of us young scientists a lot of confidence in ourselves.

Becca: Sorry about that. Murt, someone called Murt away. But kind of going, I guess where the conversation has already going, have you had, I know Paige just said she had a really strong mentor, but have you had mentors or you know, specific people in your life that have really helped support you and helped you get where you are? And what kind of support did they offer?

Delaina: My experiences, I don't think I had like a formal mentor, like I did not have anyone both, whether it was art school or just within science, I didn't feel like someone took me under their wing. Which I really, sometimes have felt, I wish that would have happened. However, I had, when I first started doing work my, my, my spouse, he taught me a lot of things. So that was valuable to me, just even simple stuff like, "This is the field clothing you need," 'cause I had no clue, I was wearing practically jeans, that's not good in a coastal environment, you can really, you know, get in trouble wearing the wrong thing: if it rains and you get cold etcetera. But the person that I think of often is someone that I feel like we mentor each other. So she's younger than I am, but, and she has a science background; when I started we would, we were kind in a position where we were trying to solve problems, we were working on the same landscape, we had to sometimes work as a team, sometimes work independently, and we had problems come up, so we really sort of helped each other, and so I still think we continue to mentor each other. I, I meet with her, right now we just started meeting up every week because we're dealing with some issues with our work, or we're dealing with different issues but we help each other find, just by talking with each other, we come up with solutions and I think that's super valuable for me.

Lauren: I think I'll jump off the, the idea that Delaina mentioned of being mentored by someone who maybe isn't in a position, a supervisory position to you. But I found most of my mentors, especially my female mentors, have come from other graduate students when I was in a graduate program or, or even the, the lab techs at LUMCON that I'm working with, is you have a sort of a system of people who, who prop you up and who are going through the same thing with you. That's not to say that I haven't had good mentors in advisory roles, but I think a lot of science is establishing a community, a sort of base that will support you and, and especially for women because, while there were female role models, if you will, that I looked up to, in my

department at UCLA the first female tenured faculty member was still serving. So it was, you know, it's only a generation ago that the entire male faculty was, was men, were, the, the entire faculty was male. So looking for someone who is representative of you, doesn't necessarily have to be an older role model or, or somebody who supervises you but, but looking around you can be, can be really important as well.

Angel: The people that have mentored me the most is Abigail, obviously, 'cause we've been working together a year and I'm just entering the field as a worker, but before that, at LSU, there was a student and she kind of set me on the track to, like, fisheries and aquaculture. I don't think she really meant to, but she played a significant role in getting me to join the Aquaculture and Fisheries Club, showing me my love for fisheries and aquaculture, and just fish in general; she helped me get my undergraduate research grant with Dr. Chris Greene and, yeah, she was also the same age as me, but she plays a pretty significant role in my career path that it's taken.

Stephanie: Whenever I think of mentors, I always think of my undergrad advisor, Dr. Jennifer Hill; she was the first person to bring me to LUMCON, as a student, and she always encouraged me, and I worked in her lab as an undergrad. Even though at first I was kind of scared of her, honestly, 'cause whenever I started a science degree, like obviously, I had no idea what I was doing, like I didn't know any of this field of research, just no clue, totally oblivious, and she guided me a lot and gave me lots of opportunity and was very supportive. So that was a great person to have as I went through school and graduated and eventually landed where I am now. And a lot like Lauren said, you know, people you work with being very supportive, especially this year in particular, you know it's been a little rough for everyone, but the people I work with in my lab are just absolutely amazing and I can talk to them about anything; it's just really great to have that support in your workplace too. People that can boost you up, and root for you, kinda help you, guide you where you might want to go next. And I guess Brian's pretty okay too; he's a really supportive boss, so I'll throw him in there.

Becca: Sort of along those lines, what do you feel like are the most important aspects of a workplace culture to thrive as a woman in science? So I know Stephanie talked a little bit about having supportive co-workers. What other aspects are important?

Paige: I'll agree with everything Stephanie said, definitely having I think the sense of community in your workplace, whether it's your lab, whether it's the entire building, or the research staff, or even just walking around LUMCON I feel like no matter where I go and what wing I'm in I'm always running into someone that I can have a full conversation with and it doesn't have to be work related, it doesn't need to be anything too deep, but it can be, and it can be you know, if I'm having a hard day I feel like I could go up to anyone at LUMCON and just kind of be like, "Hey, can I, you know take a minute of your ear and just, you know, vent a little bit?" and I feel like having that kind of community that's just open and dynamic and appreciative. I feel like that, for me, is very important in a workplace, a place that I feel, like safe in many ways.

Angel: Having a sense of comfortability, piggybacking off of what Paige and Stephanie said like, we're comfortable with each other, we can ask each other questions, like that sense of safety that

you can just talk to anybody. I think being comfortable in your work environment and having the support of one another is super essential.

Delaina: I think too. . . I value . . . for my workspace, I value that if I'm curious about something, I can, as long as I'm getting my work done, I can pursue and potentially expand on my own research. So things like opportunities to work with other people whether it be in conferences or stuff like that, are really valuable to me and I feel like that's an experience that I can bring back and it, it's absorbed in my work which, and I get more done too, it's exciting. I think I have a lot on my plate so that's my, what I'm working towards doing, is trying to create a place where I can get some continued support for learning more, because I don't have a science background, so part of me, I was able to find, I found a free opportunity to do coding, so exciting, but it's a lot of information. I was excited about it but then I didn't have time to continue it, so I'm trying to find ways to make sure that I can make that time for myself and, and I, I expect that I'll be supported in that, as long as, of course, you know, you have to get your job done, but it can also, you know, expand your job as well.

Lauren: I like the idea of job expansion, I think one of the things that I find important in a career, as a woman, but just as, as a human being, is to have the ability to grow. I found that, especially, when you're in a situation where you are one of the few women and you're noticing that, "Hey, maybe this isn't working the best way to serve female students. We're going out in the field and we don't have a place for them to, to even use the restroom. We haven't, you know, this class hasn't been designed to accommodate those kinds of needs." Having a, a workplace situation where your supervisors, where your colleagues are willing to step up and put in a little bit of extra work to change the status quo; especially to accommodate different kinds of students, of coworkers, of colleagues, I think that's important, for me, in a workplace, is to have that ability to grow.

Becca: You all came from, actually all ended up coming to science from sort of non-science, different places. Do you see the kinds of places that people with science backgrounds changing? So sort of, like it used to be, like you get a science degree, and then you go into academia and you, you get your PhD, and then you do your research. Do you see, the diversity that we're seeing, is that leading to expansion or different roads?

Delaina: It seems like there's, things are, at least from my perspective, it seems like things are moving out towards, "How do we communicate science?" and communicating and telling the story because it is so exciting. What we, I think we all do something that we really just love; how do we connect that and get it across to people where they might be drawn in and be excited by it too? And what drives me is I want things to matter.

Lauren: I think that's definitely an issue that science is grappling with because there's a lot of gatekeeping in science. You know, just in terms of getting into graduate school you need to have a GRE, that's starting to come less of a requirement for many schools and I think many people are realizing that, "Hey, it's not," well first of all, it's not a good measure of whether you're a good graduate student or not but you don't need to have a certain type of background

to be a scientist, you don't need to meet these certain requirements. So, I'm not sure that it's, it's happening just yet that the pathway is becoming much easier, for those outside of the typical scientific career path, to get into science but I think that we are definitely seeing, especially with science communication, a, a realization that these kind of typical hurdles that we think of a scientist needing to overcome are maybe not the ones that we should be throwing up, and that we should instead be trying to welcome more people into science.

Paige: Yeah, I feel like the communication not only of your science but also, too, other scientists. For example, I mean, I didn't really know if I wanted to go into a Master's program but, but I was able to talk to people who are in a Master's program, who have come out of it, who are also considering it, just having that ability to talk to people about your opportunity, and your growth, and where you can go in science itself, and understanding what's out there, I feel like that's really, really important.

Angel: This question was a bit confusing for me because, with the background that I had, in Renewable Natural Resources, they didn't necessarily push the like, "You get a science degree, you go in academia," they pushed more, kind of like, wildlife management jobs. So to me, there's already a lot of different branches out there that scientists can go into: state, federal, stuff like that, managing populations. So, maybe that would expand, like more applied stuff, as climate change becomes a larger problem. I'm hoping that scientists will shift to industry, like green energy and stuff like that, so that it's more available to the public and that the public can understand scientists more. Which goes back on the communicating our science, and our work, and stuff like that.

Murt: Do you ever consider leaving LUMCON or university to pursue something in the private industry?

Stephanie: It's so early in my career that I kinda want to explore what's out there, 'cause I won't know until I do it, and I don't want to pursue the PhD route which, I feel, is kind of, I guess you don't have to, to work in, like research how we are, but it almost feels like you have to move up. I like where I am now and hopefully I'll be here for a little bit longer, and then I'll take the next step, wherever that may lead me.

Angel: I had never actually planned on staying in academia, I do want to have, like a state or federal position working on a project that has very applied, like it helps. One of my professors at LSU, Reagan Errera, she moved to the North, and she works on harmful algal blooms and that directly helps the environment, it helps the people that live there, and that's kind of what I see myself doing in the long term.

Paige: I think I'm like Angel in the fact that I, I really want to go into restoration, I think, especially in the Northeast, the, the algal bloom is a huge issue. I also feel like, that I've been in academia, like Stephanie, my entire career: going from degree to degree, and then getting a grand opportunity to go abroad, but it was still under an academic roof. So, I definitely, I'm not saying that I want to run away from academia, but, to broaden my wings, I'm not opposed to it.

Lauren: I think that's, sort of where I'm, I'm at: where I'm not opposed to staying in academia, but I'm definitely looking for something that's more applied. I think right now we're grappling with, as academics, how do we get the results of our research out to the broader public in, in a faster paced manner? Because climate change is happening so quickly, and lots of issues that, maybe we're not even asking the right questions yet. So, how do we go to the public? How do we know that we're answering questions that will be useful in the next five or ten years? And then, how do we make sure that they're implemented? Those are some of the questions that I would like to ask and if that, if that comes in an academic setting, or if it comes in a, a government or private-sector job, that's where I would like to be.

Angel: It is a struggle though because there's so many cool things in academia that I would love to learn more about; there's so many different things that you can look at, but at the end of the day in order to reach my end goal, which is helping environments and animals on a large-scale, I feel like I'm going to have to be in more, something more applied.

Delaina: I feel like I'm already in the applied, to some degree, with my job; I've, I've worked on several projects, some of which have helped particular species; they're being applied and then I get to work with a network of other scientists along the Gulf Coast, where we are all working together to develop a system where we are all consistent, so our science is stronger, so that it can, and then we would, we can be working with landowners and management, so that it actually filters down and gets, right off the bat with, that's the effort that's going on. Hearing what some of y'all are saying, I think some of that just sorta trickles down, whether you know it or not, even if you are doing academics, it's finding its way, maybe not as directly, but for me, I guess, I'm lucky enough to get to do the research and then have it apply and benefit in some way or, way, shape, or form.

Murt: What words of advice do you have for future generations of marine scientists, especially future women in science? What would you tell people who are listening to this?

Delaina: My first thought with that question was, I think volunteering. It provides experiences and allows you to connect with others and, that in turn, can provide other opportunities. And if you are ready when those opportunities show up, you can end up having a job. That's what happened with me; I seriously, just showing up, and being persistent, and not giving up, and being open; you know when I, when I took that course in LUMCON I was, I would, had headphones on the whole time and I looked down, I did not talk to people, I was, I just kept to myself, I was a little artist; you know I'm very different, I've grown so much from that experience, but part of it was being, showing up and being open to, to experiences, letting things in, so that I can start giving back.

Angel: My word of advice, just to, like general any young person trying to figure out what they wanna do with their life, is figure out what you like and look at specific jobs; like look at the job duties associated with a certain job because, I had a lot of preconceived notions, like assumptions of what a job would be, and then I would look at the actual duties and it wasn't that at all. And that's kind of what led me to where I am today, and it, get experience, like Delaina said, in

everything that you can possibly do, to make sure that you know what you like, and you know what you want to do before investing years worth of schooling into it, like I did the first go-around.

Paige: Mine are short and sweet. I would say: get involved and ask questions. The easiest things to do: volunteer, get involved, and then just don't be afraid to find your voice and ask the questions that you wanna ask.

Stephanie: I definitely agree with volunteering. That helped me a little bit in undergrad. I volunteered with some coastal restoration projects and I met people and, like a year before I graduated, I had someone emailing me encouraging me to apply for a job position, but I was like, "I'm still in school right now." But, definitely volunteer, don't be afraid to talk to people. Growing up I was the quietest child to exist and I did not want to talk to anyone, but once I realized it can help, I started talking and I made some connections. Don't be afraid to start at community college. I think that's a big thing a lot of people struggle with, is sometimes you have to start where you don't wanna start, but it's a good place to. I'm just full of advice for young people I guess, since I struggled so much to get to where I am.

Lauren: I think my bit of advice would be to find your people. A lot of times scientists think that, you know, you're looking for the question or, or whatever that, that big picture that drives you, your passion projects, but I think it's, it's just as important to find the community that supports you. And make sure that you have people there to cheer you on.

Angel: I did wanna ask **Delaina:** do you see yourself switching jobs anytime soon or do you think you're at the point where you want to be?

Delaina: Let me just say that, doing, starting the research, you know some of what I, what I did when I first started working, is I didn't have the science background, so I learned a lot from my mistakes. Which, I didn't want, after a while you're like, "I can't keep going like this. It's, it's too much work." Because then you gotta go back and do everything over again. So, now I'm at a place where I'm getting better at that; finding answers in a more efficient way. And I'm still, there's so much to learn, it's very exciting now. Some of the work I do is, can be, depressing, you know with climate change, you know our, our, the, some of these species that I study like red knot, they, the land that they, they visit this spot one time a year, for the most part, some of 'em 'll over winter and stuff, but essentially, you're, you're dealing with a bird that's listed on Endangered Species List and it's not looking good. So sometimes it can be depressing, but then there's another, then you'll learn something new about, "Hey, we just learned this though!" That's, that's a new thing that, and it gives you that hope, just to keep driving you, to keep going, so I guess, the short answer would have been: I don't see myself changing, as long as I have this element, and am offered and supported with continuing the research, and answering these questions, and feeling value in the work that I do. Now I need to go to LUMCON at some point, maybe when this thing is over, and we can hang out. I would like that. We should do lunch.