When I was in my 10th grade honors chemistry class, I never thought I would be learning chemistry in college although I maintained an A in that class throughout the school year and was recommended by my teacher to take AP chemistry. I was intimidated in high school about college level chemistry, math, and any of the hard sciences compared to the soft sciences. To be humble, I am shocked yet proud of my journey to becoming a biology major with a marine biology concentration and comfortable taking multiple science classes at the same time with responsibilities of writing and math skills. I doubted myself many times in high school although my academic trajectory looked promising, and I still doubt myself in college leading to my future career goals and aspirations. Although I have self-doubt and weaknesses at times, one of my greatest strengths is being persistent in my journey and focusing on my present goals in college that will lead me to a career in marine biology whether it be conservation or research.

I recall first having the interest in studying marine biology when I was in the 11th grade after acquiring knowledge in AP environmental science that year. In most of my time in high school, I was not sure what I wanted to study in college other than knowing I was interested in environmental science, ecology, and biology. I consciously knew I wanted to make a difference in studying anthropogenic issues harming the environment and the oceans such as global and ocean warming, ocean acidification, air and water pollution, overfishing, and other examples of "tragedy of the commons" that is unsustainable in society such as non-renewable energy usage and animal protein production and consumption. Soon after in the summer of that year in 2020, I began to become passionate in preparing myself for studying marine biology in college by starting to document what I learned in my notebook or personal journal titled, "Marine Biology and Environmental Conservation Studies." In my journal, I wrote observations of marine biology and deep-sea exploration documentaries with notes of the technology, research, and facts of the field I wanted to remember for the future. Although I have not had hands-on experience or accomplishments in the marine biology field yet, I have been making curious observations of what professionals in the field accomplish in their work and what it takes to be an ethical marine biologist. What I hope to do to further my potential and qualifications for my marine biology career while in college is to become a chemistry minor to become more familiar with biochemical pathways, organic chemistry reactions, and environmental chemistry. I also hope to do undergraduate research if given the opportunity. My end goal leading up my marine biology career is to build a build a strong foundation with my bachelor's degree or to continue with a master's degree in marine biology to conduct research if I am qualified. What I am most passionate about in building my marine biology career is directly contributing to the health of the oceans with marine protected areas, promoting species diversity and stable marine ecosystems and communities, researching anthropogenic issues affecting the oceans, and being a part of biological solutions for restoring bleached coral and other disrupted ecological communities. My strengths in accomplishing my career goals include the passion to learn about biology, chemistry, ecology, geology, and oceanography; the desire to be a part of a larger effort to replenish the oceans and protect them ecological disruptions and anthropogenic issues affecting marine populations and ecosystems as a whole; and my patience in building knowledge and experience over time to become the best marine biologist my potential allows for. One of my academic strengths that can also be a weakness is taking my time slowly more than the average person to fixate on details and learning step-by-step at my pace. I am not by any means a fast learner or

gifted with the potential to become a talented professional in the marine biology field, but my weaknesses have made me appreciate hard work and taking the necessary steps at my pace to learn. I believe I can be a valuable candidate for a master's program in marine biology, a marine biology internship, or a starting career in conservation efforts and/or lab work with my drive to prevail over my weaknesses and any challenges I may encounter in order to meet my present and future career goals.

Above all, I am a knowledge seeker ready to gain more experience in the field of marine biology specializing in studies of ecology and conservation in the face of the environmental and anthropogenic issues unfolding during this critical century. In the 10th grade, I had a limiting mindset of not believing I could have the potential to study the hard sciences, but I worked hard enough in the past to build up to the surprise reality I am experiencing today. I now believe I have the potential to do the same in building the foundation of my marine biology career and accomplishing more than I ever thought was possible for me considering my weaknesses. I will continue to learn at my own pace to accomplish my present academic goals leading up to my future experiences and career goals in the marine biology field.