

Olivia Faris

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Education

Florida Atlantic University, Fort Pierce, FL, Anticipated May 2026
Pursuing M.S. in Biology
GPA: 4.0

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, May 2024
B.S. in Biology
Minors in Environmental Science and Anthropology
GPA: 3.999

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, Spring 2023

Research Interests

- Evaluating how organisms respond to changes in the environment, specifically through the lens of climate change
- Understanding ecological relationships and how these are being altered by human impacts
- Developing cost-effective, practical strategies to conserve vulnerable ecosystems and species
- Understanding and predicting how coral reefs will respond to multiple environmental stressors associated with anthropogenic impacts
- Integrating molecular and physiological analyses with long-term monitoring efforts to understand how reefs are changing over time and inform conservation efforts
- Better understanding marine disease outbreaks and how human impacts are impacting these events, as well as elucidating how to best bolster reefs from future epizootics
- Evaluating relationships between coral host and symbiont and explaining how these relationships will be disrupted by climate change

Relevant Coursework

Graduate:

Coral Reef Ecology
Biological Oceanography
AI Applications in Biology

Undergraduate:

Oceanography
Comparative Animal Physiology
Environmental Ecology*
Ecology
Topics in Australian Marine Science*
Cellular and Molecular Biology

Physics and Chemistry of the Environment
 General Chemistry
 Earth Science
 Earth's Dynamic Surface (Geomorphology)
 Environmental Issues
 Probability and Statistics
 Biological Anthropology
 Genetics
 Evolution
 Climate Change
 Statistics in R

*at the University of New South Wales, Sydney Australia

Research Experience

Graduate Research Assistant, Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, Florida Atlantic University,

August 2024 – Present

Research Advisor: Joshua Voss

- Maintained corals in aquaria and monitored coral physiology through Pulse-Amplitude Modulated Fluorometry (PAM) and image analysis
- Conducted quarterly roving diver disease monitoring surveys using scientific diving
- Completed molecular laboratory work including DNA and RNA extraction and library preparation
- Participated in a research cruise involving scientific diving, sampling corals for population genetics analysis, and applying antibiotic ointment to diseased coral specimens
- Presented anticipated experimental design in a proposal seminar, a poster presentation at the Benthic Ecology Meeting, and a presentation in the FAU 3 Minute Thesis competition.

Undergraduate Researcher, Shannon Point Marine Center, University of Western Washington,
June 2023 – August 2023

Research Advisors: Nathan Schwarck and Derek Smith

- Conducted a two month long scientific diving experiment on sea star wasting, utilizing data collection methods such as belt transects and roving diver surveys
- Presented at three public outreach events about local intertidal invertebrates, including at Miller Bay, Kids Are Best Fest, and National Association of Marine Educators Conference
- Awarded an NSF grant, was one of 8 students selected out of over 300 applicants, and received AAUS scientific dive training and certification
- Analyzed and presented data in a presentation and a scientific paper to be submitted for publishing

Undergraduate Researcher, Biology Department, Wake Forest University,
June 2022 – January 2023

Research Advisor: Z. Carter Berry

- Conducted three-month long greenhouse drought experiment on 60 longleaf pine seedlings

- Learned and utilized complex data collection and analysis techniques, such as the Licor portable photosynthesis machine, PMS pressure chamber, and multiple microscopy methods
- Analyzed and visualized data using R, ImageJ, and Microsoft Excel
- Presented data at The Longleaf Alliance Biennial Conference and WFU Undergraduate Research Day

University Service and/or Community Service

Graduate Teaching Assistant, FAU Harbor Branch, Fort-Pierce, FL, January 2025 – May 2025

- Taught undergraduate students both laboratory and field-based techniques, such as microscopy and identification of various plant and animal species.
- Led field trips within the Indian River Lagoon in Florida for sample collection, gave feedback on presentations.

Volunteer, Environmental Educators, Winston-Salem, NC, August 2021 – May 2024

- Educated middle school students at 15 schools on relevant environmental issues
- Developed curriculum to effectively communicate complex issues such as climate change, pollution, and energy efficiency

New Member Director, Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority, Winston-Salem, NC, January 2022 – January 2023

- Organized informational and social events for 30 new members on sorority traditions while attending to needs to ensure safety and comfortability
- Planned and implemented an event for 100 people to welcome new members

Executive Recruitment Board Member, Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority, Winston-Salem, NC, January 2022 – May 2024

- Researched and compiled important information about potential new chapter members and effectively communicated details to chapter
- Collaborated with team members to create recruitment strategies, organize informational events, and meet with individuals interested in our chapter

Volunteer, Glen Ellyn Children's Resource Center, Glen Ellyn, IL, June 2019 – August 2019

- Instructed underserved children in science, math, reading, and writing
- Assisted teaching through one-on-one interactions and groups of students

Volunteer, Coral Restoration Foundation, Willemstad, Curaçao, June 2018 – July 2018

- Cleaned structures on coral tree nurseries and transplanted corals onto permanent structures
- Trained in underwater coral restoration utilizing SCUBA diving

Publications and Presentations

“Assessing Synergistic Impacts of Thermal Stress and Disease in *Montastraea cavernosa* on Florida’s Coral Reef” Poster presented at the Benthic Ecology Meeting, Mobile, AL, April 2025

“Two Droughts are Too Much: Longleaf Pines Manage Water Poorly After Two Years of Drought” Poster presented at the Longleaf Alliance Biennial Conference, Wilmington, NC, October 2022

Laboratory and Technical Skills

Proficient in R, Microsoft Excel, Word, Powerpoint, ImageJ

Proficient in DNA and RNA extraction protocols and library preparation, Pulse-Amplitude Modulated Fluorometry (PAM), Aquarium management and maintenance, Microscopy, Li-cor Portable Photosynthesis Machine, PMS Pressure Chamber

AAUS Certified Scientific Diver, proficient in diving methods such as belt transects and roving diver surveys

DAN CPR and First Aid Certified

Professional Memberships

American Academy of Underwater Sciences, August 2023

Selected Honors, Awards, and Fellowships

FAU Biology Graduate Dean’s Fellowship Award

Honorable Mention Awarded for NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program Application

1st Place in Preliminary Round of FAU 3 Minute Thesis Competition

Deans List, Wake Forest University, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023

NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates Program, Shannon Point Marine Center, Summer 2023

Summer Environmental Fellowship, Wake Forest University, Summer 2022

References

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