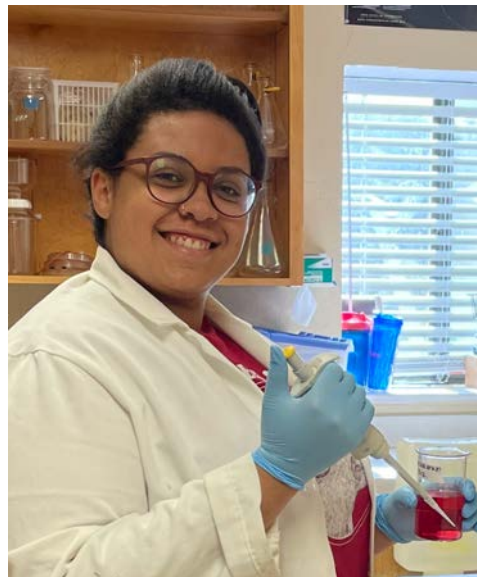


## Undergraduate Spotlight: Miranda Jackson

When Miranda Jackson came to the University of Florida, she had a goal in mind. However, as is common with many students, plans – and majors – change. Miranda discovered the Interdisciplinary Studies: Environmental Management in Agriculture and Natural Resources (IS-EMANR) program. This May, she graduates with her B.S. degree.



Miranda Jackson (Photo provided)

### **Hometown**

Fleming Island, FL, which is south of Jacksonville.

### **Transfer or four-year UF student?**

Four-year student, but I transferred from UF campus to UF Online in 2019.

### **Why did you choose EMANR as a major?**

I wanted to be a veterinarian, but that plan unfortunately did not work out. I got into nature trips a while back as a way to see wild animals, because I wasn't able to see them anymore after leaving my job as a veterinary technician. Through those trips, I learned a lot about the environment and environmental issues. I found the Environmental Management major on the UF majors catalog and thought it was a perfect fit!

### **Any particular class(es) that you've enjoyed or found interesting?**

I really enjoyed Wetlands (SWS 4244), taught by Dr. Mark Clark, Managing Public Lands and Waters (FOR 6934), taught by Dr. Clark Seely, and Sustainable Agricultural and Urban Land Management (SWS 4207), taught by Dr. Sam Smidt.

### **Were you involved in any extracurricular activities or clubs?**

I am one of two undergraduate student representatives on the SWSD Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. I'm currently teaching myself how to code using The Odin Project program, which has been very fun!! Other than that, though, I enjoy weightlifting, reading, and going to theme parks (in non-COVID times!).

**Any study abroad experiences?**

Unfortunately, I have never left the United States! I hope to change that though, after COVID is properly taken care of, and go to Japan for my first trip out of the country.

**Did you have any internships or research work experiences in UF labs?**

I currently work under Dr. Ed Philips at the UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants. There, I research the effects of microplastics in local waterbodies, grow algae for biofuel production, and analyze phytoplankton biomass compositions. It's been a great experience and has even allowed me to get properly published in Nature's *Scientific Reports*, which was an honor for me as an undergraduate student.

**Plans after graduation?**

After I graduate with my B. S. degree, I will be completing a Master of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences degree. Dr. Philips will be my advisor. I'm really excited to learn more about aquatic environments and the animals that live in them. As I complete that degree, I hope to get accepted to the Environmental Sustainability graduate internship at Walt Disney Imagineering in Burbank, California. I've always wanted to live on the west coast and starting it out by being an Imagineer would be the best new beginning!



Miranda in Dr. Ed Philips' lab (Photo provided)

**What is your advice to high school students or undecided undergraduate students?**

In a nutshell, explore all the opportunities you're given and never lose hope that you're on your way to where you should be. Since being accepted to UF, I have changed my major four times, been diagnosed with a learning disability, and completely rewrote my entire "life plan" almost every year. I felt very disappointed when I decided to not pursue veterinary medicine anymore, but it was the best decision I could have made. Also, if you can manage it, get some real-world work experience! I've been granted so many opportunities through the various jobs I've had as a college student. The impacts those have had on my life are immeasurable!