

Researcher Bio

Sarah Wolf



Meet Sarah Wolf, a microbiology Ph.D. candidate at OSU. Sarah grew up in Sacramento, California, where she loved to go crabbing on the North Coast with her dad. As a kid, she always loved the outdoors and was inherently curious, but she didn't know she would one day become a scientist.

Sarah's path to graduate school was not straightforward (undergrad major change, transfer, gap year, worked in industry for a startup). But while an undergrad at the University of the Virgin Islands, she discovered microbiology research and fell in love with it. Her undergraduate mentors encouraged her to seek out other research experiences, which led her to the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory to study microbes that inhabit spacecraft assembly facilities. She graduated from California State University Los Angeles with a B.S. in Microbiology with a minor in Political Science in 2017.

Her research experiences inspired her to pursue a Ph.D. in microbiology at Oregon State. She chose to come to Oregon State because of the Department of Microbiology's breadth of expertise on environmental microbiology topics. Sarah is co-advised by Dr. Stephen Giovannoni in Microbiology and Dr. Francis Chan in Integrative Biology. Bacteria, while small, are ubiquitous in the ocean, and their role

in the global carbon cycle influences much of the biogeochemistry in the ocean. Sarah's doctoral research looks at how bacteria respond to low oxygen concentrations like the seasonal hypoxia events that occur off the Oregon Coast. Hypoxia is a condition in which the seawater close to the seafloor has such low dissolved oxygen levels that the organisms living there can't survive. Hypoxia events have broad impacts on coastal communities, biodiversity, and fisheries. Her research aims to help predict when those events take place.

To help pay for graduate school, Sarah has been funded through a graduate assistantship for most of her time at OSU. In 2021, she received the Mark H. Middlekauf Outstanding Graduate Achievement in Microbiology scholarship. She was also awarded the Sheila Van Zandt Student Research Experience Scholarship, which secured funding for her undergraduate trainee to help on a project related to her thesis work.

Some of Sarah's favorite memories as a graduate student have been the time spent with her lab group, whether drinking coffee, drawing chemical reactions on the whiteboard in the office, or celebrating at lab baby showers together. The members of the Giovannoni lab are collaborative, helpful and always make her laugh.

Outside of school, Sarah plays a lot of volleyball year-round, on beach courts in the summer to indoor courts during the rainy season here in Oregon. She is also an Instagram influencer (@scientist.sarahwolf) where she shares her enthusiasm for science, STEM-themed picture books, and her journey as a woman in science. Sarah also loves to read, cook, and spend time with her French bulldog, Winston.

Source: <https://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/story/sarah-wolf-microbiology-phd>

Connect with Sarah:

Website <https://www.sarahwolf.online>

Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/scientist.sarahwolf>