

WORLD WATER HUB SUCCESS STORY

MELISSA MARRA



A GEOSCIENCES PATH

When Melissa Marra completed her associate's degree she headed straight to the University of Wisconsin-Parkside in Kenosha to obtain her bachelor's degree in environmental geosciences. The geosciences major is growing in popularity, especially in Wisconsin—a state that contains an extensive system of groundwater and surface water that can easily be incorporated into the curriculum at schools throughout the state. Working closely with The Water Council (TWC) and other state organizations, geosciences professors at UW-Parkside provide research opportunities to students through real-world training.

While attending UW-Parkside, Marra became more familiar with the state's position as the hub for freshwater research and quickly immersed herself in TWC's Student Chapter. "Through quarterly meetings with The Water Council and other significant water-focused organizations in the state, I made a lot of great contacts," said Marra. "The Water Council arranged multiple networking opportunities, providing me with the opportunity to make important connections that led me to where I am today."

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One of the first events Marra attended was TWC's Speed Networking Event, which sparked her interest to become even more involved with the organization. Eventually, she was elected as president of TWC's Student Chapter at UW-Parkside. Marra's determination and initiative put her in a position to leverage the numerous opportunities TWC offers through its student chapters throughout the state.



Marra networking as a student at a Quarterly Member Meeting in 2015.

"The Water Council has an amazing staff that supports and encourages students as they achieve their career goals," shared Marra.

PRIMED FOR SUCCESS

While attending one of TWC's quarterly member meetings, Marra met leaders from Natural Resource Technology (NRT), an OBG Company, located in Milwaukee's Water Technology District. While she earned her degree, Marra maintained a relationship with the company and not long after graduation, when a position became available for an Environmental Technician, she was hired.



Marra with the UW-Parkside Geology Club.

Marra was excited to join the team at NRT, which consists of environmental engineering and consulting professionals who deliver solutions for the development, management, restoration and sustainability of natural resources. Marra's background and education in geology and knowledge of groundwater issues made her a perfect fit to provide environmental consulting services to the company's clients in the public and private sectors.



Marra credits her professors and the courses at UW-Parkside for helping her to determine her career path in environmental consulting with NRT, and organizations like TWC for supporting her career goals and providing her with networking opportunities. But she also gives credit to the state of Wisconsin as being an excellent place to start a water-focused environmental career. "There are many schools within the University of Wisconsin System that offer majors pertaining to the environmental and water industries," said Marra.

"For young people considering a path like mine, I would suggest being proactive in looking for opportunities to build your resume. Become involved in your community and take advantage of professional opportunities like participating in TWC's Student Chapter. Because you just never know who you'll meet or who might offer you your next job."

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It's abundantly clear that Marra has a bright future ahead of her in the field of water technology, innovation and environmental consulting.

"Water is the most important resource on the planet and I see it involved in my future in many ways," added Marra. "I plan to further my career in the environmental consulting industry to utilize remediation technologies to restore and clean up contaminated water sources."