

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



CAL POLY
College of Engineering

6 Questions with Alumna Madeleine White

Job Title: Water Security Specialist

Company: The Meridian Group

Client: Assistant Secretary of the Navy — Energy,
Installations and Environment

Environmental Engineering, '19

Civil Engineering, '20

How does your Cal Poly education apply to your job and daily life?

Cal Poly taught me how to conduct research in an age of an overwhelming amount of information. It gave me a solid foundation in core concepts and, maybe more importantly, taught me how to learn and identify quality resources amid the noise.

What are your hobbies?

My hobbies include animal fostering (I've fostered four dogs and 12 kittens!), hiking, thrift shopping, dancing, baking and weightlifting.

What advice would you give to current engineering students?

1. When things get tough (and they will), lean into it. Embrace the challenges, because struggling is part of learning.
2. Start building your network now: friends, mentors, classmates. Those connections will keep you on track, keep your head above water and continue growing.

What clubs or activities were you involved in while at Cal Poly?

I volunteered for Cal Poly Safer and was a member of Cal Poly's competition team for the annual WERC Environmental Design Contest. I also played on multiple co-ed intramural sports teams, including softball, frisbee and soccer.

What do you think engineering's biggest impact on the world will be in the future?

I believe and hope that within my lifetime we will see global access to safe, affordable and reliable drinking water for all people, in times of peace, war and natural disasters. While this is more than just an engineering challenge, I've seen remarkable technological advancements that make this goal increasingly possible.

What else would you like to share with students?

Adversity comes in many forms, and it's a constant in our lives — something I've learned to be grateful for. Treat it as an opportunity to build resilience, strengthen your network of supportive people, and keep believing in and investing in yourself. You are worth it.

