

Pursuing a Ph.D.

Earth sciences major heads to grad school

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MADISON WOOD '19

Long before her senior year, Madison Wood '19 knew she wanted to pursue a doctoral degree and work toward a career in climate-oriented research.

That dream is now on its way to becoming a reality.

"After graduation I'm headed to graduate school," she says. "I will be pursuing a Ph.D. in Earth sciences at the University of California Santa Cruz, studying paleoclimatology, the study of past climate."

Last year, when Wood was honored with a [Barry Goldwater Scholarship](#) — considered the nation’s most prestigious undergraduate scholarship in the natural sciences, mathematics and engineering — she was already working toward that goal, with her sights set on graduate school. “My research will use the tools of isotope geochemistry to reconstruct how the climate and oceans have changed through periods of Earth’s history. Reconstructing past climate change allows scientists to better understand how the climate system works and better predict the future changes we need to prepare for,” she says of the work she’ll undertake toward her doctorate.

Wood has been very active during her time at UNH — not just in her studies with fellow [Earth sciences](#) students and her faculty mentors but as a member of the [University Honors Program](#) and a volunteer with UNH’s [STEMbassadors](#). Earlier this month, she was honored with the University Award of Excellence, which recognizes leadership, scholarship and citizenship.

“Many of my fondest UNH memories are from my four years with the STEMbassadors outreach program,” Wood says. “I will most remember the wonderful friends I made in the program, our traditional trivia nights and hikes and the inspirational — and cute — thank-you notes from the students we worked with.”

And as she prepares for the next step in her education, she offers a bit of advice for the newest Wildcats in the Class of 2023: “Don’t worry too much about knowing exactly what you want to be when you grow up. Instead, focus on making the most of the enriching opportunities UNH will put in front of you, and give yourself room to develop new interests, change your mind about things and figure out who you really want to be.”

Learn more about [Earth sciences at UNH](#).

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THE PLACES THEY’LL GO 2019



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