



# Student Ambassador Spotlight

## Steffen Matthews

Biology Student at the University of Memphis  
Buckman STEM Ambassador

**Q How did you select your college major?**

**A** When I was young my favorite places to go were the woods, the Memphis Zoo, or the park; if you can think of a place with plenty of trees and animals I would love to be there. I always excelled at the life sciences, and I have no doubt in my mind that has everything to do with my love of biology and geology!

**Q What was the biggest influence in your selection of major?**

**A** It was probably my grandfather. He would always take me wherever I wanted to go, but was surprised when the majority of the time it was the Pink Palace Museum or the Memphis Zoo. He knew I loved to learn about all of the earthly sciences and always encouraged me to approach them academically.

**Q If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college, what would it be?**

**A** I would have liked to take Physics in high school. I was always intimidated by the subject, but it is fairly practical and many subjects use plenty of physics material.

**Q What is your favorite aspect of your major?**

**A** I love learning about the different aspects that make up life, and about how many rock formations and geological, as well as botanical, aspects of the world are affected by naturally occurring chemical reactions.

**Q How does you/your major make a positive impact on society?**

**A** The study of biology helps us to understand our environment, and thus helps us to understand how best to preserve and benefit from it. Many biologists work along the Mississippi River to assure that it remains cared for, since it is such a large body of moving water, and doing so greatly improves how efficiently, cleanly, and safely we can transport up and down the river without any environmental problems or disruptions!



**Q** What's the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your college career?

**A** I was able to work with Powerflow LLC, with the University of Memphis former Chair of Mechanical Engineering Dr. Hochstein and the late John Willingham, to create a waterwheel system for a self-sustaining barge that could use moving bodies of water to create high amounts of electricity as a green power source.

**Q** What makes you get up each morning excited about your major?

**A** Not only do I go to school to learn more about something that I love, but I also know that I can work in that field! I couldn't ask for anything more than to help provide new information for future students to learn!

**Q** What advice would you share with K-12 students who are considering your major?

**A** These are the grades where Biology and the natural sciences are taught the most, so if you love your science classes and you want to learn more there are so many different ways you can explore them! I suggest the library, a natural museum, or even just a park or the zoo; if you are looking to learn about Biology you will find it everywhere!

