

Personal Statement

Faith Rovenolt

Ecology & Evolutionary Biology

U-M ID: [REDACTED]

My upbringing has molded me into an independent and self-motivated learner. My father is active duty military, so as a child my family moved often. Before high school, I had lived in five different places, including Japan, and attended just as many schools, including being homeschooled. Between moves, my family road-tripped cross-country, stopping at science museums and national parks. This instilled in me a love of science and nature that I actively pursued. However, while my upbringing afforded me many wonderful experiences, it also meant I had to learn to adapt and be flexible. I found a deep appreciation for the ability to pick up a book and take it with me anywhere. Because of being a military dependent I can also appreciate the value of being a member of the scientific community, which, like the military, is a global community that can become a part of your identity as well as a support system. Growing up a military kid was often difficult, but as I have grown and realized my passion for research biology, I have been able to look back on my childhood and appreciate how it shaped me into a capable and strong scientist.

Additionally, the University of Michigan's commitment to the health and happiness of its students—as shown by their recent taskforce on graduate student mental health lead by Dr. Meghan Duffy—is extremely important to me. As someone who has experienced mental health difficulties, I deeply value this. I am incredibly proud of myself for working through and living with my mental health issues, and I also pride myself on my ability to also be a resource for others. However, there is only so much I can do and to know that a university is there, creating a support system for myself and others, is extremely important to me. There are so many things that can be done at the institutional level that make a difference, like including a section on mental health resources in syllabi. I want to go to a graduate school that both has those resources and where I can also help contribute. I want to attend the University of Michigan as I believe it will be a school that appreciates me as a whole and complete person and who will support me, foster my independence, and allow me to help others.