



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

TARA'S STORY

My MATE story began at Long Beach City College where I enrolled in the Electrical Program. This two-year program focuses on industrial electrical and preparing students for careers in the electrical field such as electricians. However, there is an elective course in robotics taught by Scott Fraser that delves into ROVs, specifically the MATE competition. It was through this class that I was encouraged by my instructor to apply for the MATE At-Sea Internship. I applied and was selected by Dr. Robert Ballard's E/V Nautilus team as an engineering intern. I traveled to Turkey to do deep sea exploration in the waters of the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea as an ROV pilot. What started out as a two week internship turned into 3 1/2 months, where I was offered a position as a contract pilot for the Ocean Exploration Trust as a result of the internship. I have since traveled as a pilot throughout the Mediterranean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and eastern Pacific from the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador to Vancouver, British Columbia. This was all thanks to the opportunity of both the internship and skills learned through the ROV competition.

Having gotten involved with MATE through competition and the internship, I was all in when the development of SeaMATE came about. I was able to travel to New Orleans for the Underwater Intervention conference to speak and present my MATE experiences and present SeaMATE as a product. The scope of the MATE ROV competition completely prepared me for this presentation.

I graduated from Long Beach City College in 2014 and currently work at the Disneyland Resort in the Engineering Services department as a Ride Controls Systems specialist when not out at sea as an ROV pilot. At Disneyland, I maintain ride control systems, animatronics and special effects. I also am continuing my education and pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering while working full time.

Teamwork, troubleshooting, performing under pressure, and time management are only a few of the skills the MATE competition has instilled in me as I continue in my professional career as both a contract ROV pilot and engineer at the Disneyland Resort.