

Michael Gerdjikian
About Me

I am currently an undergraduate student in the Civil and Environmental department at the University of South Florida. It wasn't until taking a couple of environmental classes last semester, such as *Water Quality and Treatment* and *Environmental Systems Engineering* that I realized what I wanted to continue my degree in. Up until that point, I believed I wanted to be a structural engineer. It may have been that I just pictured myself becoming a structural engineer before I even started college so I never thought twice about it. However, those classes sparked an unexpected interest in me. I realized that there are issues regarding our drinking water, both availability and health related, and I would be able to make a greater impact as an environmental engineer. I was then given the opportunity to work with a graduate student who is doing research on various nanofiltration membranes. Although I have not yet taken the graduate courses he has to fully understand everything that is going into his research, I have learned a lot over the past several months. By the time I graduate from USF with my Master's Degree in Environmental Engineering, I am hoping to have the knowledge to help create a more sustainable future. This includes the expansion of desalinization plants and the acceptance of water reuse facilities.

When I found out I was chosen to go to the Delft Netherlands to learn from the greatest in the industry, I was excited. Most of what I know was learned while sitting inside a classroom and I now have the opportunity to work with professionals who have many years of research experience. I know that the Millennium Development Goals is an important topic and IHE is active in the struggle for clean and sustainable water supplies around the world. My goal for this trip is to be able to take the knowledge I gain at IHE, continue my education and research back in the states, and apply it as best I can to serve the needs of the communities nearby and afar.

In the rare occasion that I have any free time, I like to endeavor in my artwork. Since I was a child, I've been fascinated by art and over the years have created many drawings and oil paintings. I also enjoy listening to many types of music, depending on my mood.