It was the beginning of December, and with our laptops out, we anticipated signing up for and being one of the lucky few to make on the volunteer trip to Galveston. After furiously refreshing the page for ten minutes, the link appeared to register. As fast as we could, we clicked the registration button and typed our information in... “We made it... Momma we made it!...We made it on the Alternative Spring Break trip to Galveston!! Oh wait, what’s the time?!? I’m going to be late to Calculus!!” And thus our adventure began.

Fast forward to our first, second, and third meetings. We soon came to realize we weren't going on spring break with random students; we were going on spring break with nine other rockin' individuals! The team included Orientation Team Mentors, graduate school students, an international student, and even a student with blue hair. Even our RUO, an Alabama native who only spoke in one-liners and catch phrases, rounded out our diverse Alternative Spring Break team. Needless to say this 4-hour road trip couldn’t come soon enough.

Prior to this trip, most of the group members knew nothing more about environmental conservation than using the blue-topped recycling cans around campus. The Galveston Bay Foundation was more than amazing when it came to educating us in the preservation of the Galveston bay and how it is a community effort. One of the coolest things we got to be a part of was Galveston Bay Foundation’s Oyster Shell Recycling Program. Local restaurants in the bay area serve native and regional oysters. Oyster half shells saved by the restaurants are then used as a resource for building oyster reefs. The Galveston Bay Foundation picks up the shell resources, stores them, cleans them, and finally uses these shells to build reefs for new oysters and other aquatic wildlife to use and grow on. It was really crazy to imagine that eating oysters at a participating restaurant would actually help promote wildlife growth.

Now, we weren't the only university on this spring break adventure. Six students from the University of North Texas (UNT) served with us at the Galveston Bay Foundation. The bond between the two groups was almost instantaneous! Our conversations were constant and there was never a dull moment! Despite being separated by a one hour drive, we have had several reunions, meeting back up and hanging out. It is a very unique experience to meet people from other universities and remain friends after the trip. We, as an entire team, can't express how grateful we are for having had the opportunity to join forces with the “Mean Green” of UNT.

At the end of the day, Alternative Spring Break can only truly be explained by the vocabulary of this time....

“We didn’t want a BASIC spring break. We wanted to make a TRILL difference. We were saying YAASS for getting dirty in the marshes and BYE FELCIA to all those invasive species. The teamwork was ON FLEEK in this SQUAD. At the end of the
week we LITERALLY COULDN’T EVEN. It hit the FEELS so much when we had to leave. The week had gone by too fast. But here we are #TBT-ing it. Thank you OSV for setting this all up and making this year’s spring break’s one of the FUNNEST weeks ever. We truly are #BLESSED“