

# Training a New Generation of Leaders in Coastal Sustainability



UC SANTA CRUZ

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Coastal Science and Policy  
Masters Program

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# Training focused on impact, diversity, leadership, entrepreneurship

## M.S. Degree (2 years)

- Prepares students to identify, innovate, and implement scalable and socially just solutions to climate, biodiversity, and other sustainability challenges in coastal zones around the world.
- In second year, student immersed with practitioner organization to conduct individual capstone project, co-designed with partner.

## Ph.D. Designated Emphasis

- 3 interdisciplinary CSP courses
- 1 dissertation chapter – solution-focused research in close collaboration with non-academic partner
- 1 committee member from CSP faculty



**Angelo San Pablo.** 2025 Knauss Marine Policy Fellow; CSP Class of 2024. Focus: improving sustainability of aquaculture feeds; increasing youth leadership in aquaculture policy.

# How a CSP degree stands apart

## CSP Masters of Science



- Interdisciplinary, solutions-driven curriculum
- Intensive collaborations with practitioners in business, government and nonprofits
- Designed to advance a broad range of coastal sustainability fields
- Students not embedded in a faculty lab, rather students co-design & implement individual capstone projects with faculty & partner organizations to develop solutions to real problems.
- Significant one-on-one mentoring; cohort structure
- Leadership, communication, and innovation skills
- Careers across all sectors

## Traditional Masters of Science



- Narrower research and skill building focus
- Academic and publication focus
- Focused career application
- Research advances work in one university lab
- Disciplinary research-based thesis
- Designed for deep subject matter expertise
- Graduates often pursue doctoral degrees or research-based positions

### Highlights

# Impact at start of 7<sup>th</sup> year



## To date, CSP has trained 91 students

- 68 masters students
- 23 Ph.D. students with a designated emphasis in CSP
- Career enhancing positions before or within 6 months of graduation (MS)

## Diverse, inclusive student body

- 73% Black, Indigenous or Persons of Color
- 23 Countries Represented
- 50% Domestic & 50% International Students

## Funding – more than \$9M raised

- \$7.85M in program-generated philanthropic and grant support
- More than \$1.4M student-generated extramural funding

# Steady Stream of AWARDS

## National & International Competitive Awards, Grants and Recognition

National Science Foundation Small  
Business Innovation Research Grants  
National Science Foundation Graduate  
Research Fellowship

Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship  
World Wildlife Fund Russel Train Fellow  
Wildlife Conservation Society Fellowship  
Ellen MacArthur Foundation Program  
Marsh Award for Early Career Conservation

Switzer Fellowship  
Explorers Club 50  
NOAA Grants

New England Aquarium Marine Conservation Action Fund Fellow  
Sustainable Ocean Alliance Leadership Climate Resilient Fisheries Fellow  
Blackstone LaunchPad Fellowship  
QUAD Fellowship

Wildlife Conservation Network Indigenous Scholarship Program  
Verizon and Clinton Global Initiative University Social Innovation Challenge  
Inclusive Global Environment Facility Assembly Challenge

Aspen Institute New Voices Fellow & Senior Fellow  
National Geographic Explorer Grant  
Ford Foundation 2023 Predoctoral Fellowship  
New York Academy of Sciences Marine & Oceanography Fellow

Visit [csp.ucsc.edu](https://csp.ucsc.edu) for full list

# CSP Approach



# Results

▶ Recruit early career coastal leaders from across the globe

▶ Financial support: 57% partially funded, 39% fully funded

▶ Provide hands-on training

▶ Strengthen their networks

▶ Help graduates redeploy where they are most needed

## Year 1

Interdisciplinary courses

Solutions-driven curriculum

Meet with faculty and nonacademic partners to plan an individual capstone project

▶ Leadership, communication, and innovation skills

▶ Significant one-on-one mentoring

## Year 2

Implement individual capstone project with faculty and partner organizations that develop solutions for real problems

Intensive collaborations with practitioners in business, government and nonprofits

**A greater number of rising environmental leaders who reflect the full diversity of our communities and emphasize designing effective, socially just and equitable solutions.**

▶ Career-enhancing jobs

▶ Many awards

# Coastal Science and Policy Masters Program

Applications are Open  
for Fall 2025

Join a virtual open house to  
learn about the program!

[CSP.UCSC.EDU/prospective-students/](https://CSP.UCSC.EDU/prospective-students/)

## Alumni Voices

**“Through this program, I attended global plastic treaty negotiations where I learned to bridge policy, people and science to drive meaningful change.**

Through the CSP program, I gained the tools to become a leader at the intersection of science and policy, both federally and internationally. This program broadened my perspective, enabling me to analyze and address real-world challenges through multiple lenses.”

**Cindy Matuch**

2025 Sea Grant Knauss Marine Policy Fellow, CSP Class of 2024

