The graduate program in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB) at UC Santa Cruz is one of the premier EEB programs in the country. Our faculty reach the highest standards of excellence in scholarship, while maintaining an exceptional commitment to graduate student training and personal development. EEB-UCSC graduate students regularly win prestigious awards for their presentations at national and international meetings, are frequently awarded NSF Doctoral Fellowships and Dissertation Improvement Grants, and publish their work in the best journals of their fields.

UC Santa Cruz is set in a spectacular landscape of towering redwood forests, rolling hills, and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

In addition to taking advantage of local field sites and state-of-the-art departmental laboratories, more than two-thirds of our faculty also participate in field studies throughout the world, especially in Africa, Latin America, and around the Pacific Rim.

Research in EEB comprises four core tracks: (1) ecology, (2) evolutionary biology, (3) physiology, and (4) behavior.

Coastal ecosystems are some of the most unique and diverse areas of the globe, and they are also among the places most imperiled by human activities. The coastal location of the UCSC campus, including the marine lab at the Center for Ocean Health and UCSC’s natural reserves, uniquely situate EEB-UCSC for the study of coastal biodiversity and ecological processes. A special strength of our program is the integration of marine and terrestrial perspectives across all research tracks.

List of Faculty

Suzanne Alonzo
Sexual selection & social behavior

Giacomo Bernardi
Molecular evolution in fishes

Mark Carr
Marine ecology & conservation

Daniel Costa
Physiology of marine mammals & birds

Donald Croll
Conservation biology

James Estes
Ecology & conservation biology

Laurel Fox
Community ecology, plants & herbivores

Marm Kilpatrick
Plant evolutionary biology

Kristy Kroeker
Disease ecology

Bruce Lyon
Climate change & marine ecology

Rita Mehta
Behavioral ecology

Eric Palkovacs
Functional morphology & physiology

Ingrid Parker
Freshwater ecology

Jarmila Pittermann
Plant ecology & invasion biology

Grant Pogson
Plant physiology

Donald Potts
Population genetics & evolution

Peter Raimondi
Coral reef ecology

Beth Shapiro
Marine ecology

Barry Sinervo
Molecular ecology & ancient DNA

John Thompson
Behavioral ecology

Terrie Williams
Coevolution & evolutionary ecology

Affiliated Faculty

Claudio Campagna (WCS)
Conservation & environmental ethics

Steven Haddock (MBARI)
Deep sea biodiversity

Elliott Hazen (NOAA)
Quantitative ecology

Paul Koch
Paleoecology & evolution

Heather Tallis (TNC)
Conservation practices

Tim Tinker (USGS)
Population ecology of marine mammals

Kerstin Wasson (NERR)
Estuarine ecology & conservation

Chris Wilmers
Wildlife ecology & ecological modeling
DIVERSITY & COMMUNITY

EEB welcomes and encourages the diversity of perspectives and backgrounds brought by minority, underrepresented and foreign students. The EEB Diversity Enhancement Committee is dedicated to improving resources and the educational climate to enhance diversity in the EEB department, throughout UCSC, in our region and nationwide. Our current projects are focused on 1) incorporating discussions of the minority experience in EEB, 2) hosting minority and underrepresented speakers in the department, 3) supporting outreach activities to local schools and junior colleges, and 4) enhancing diversity recruitment at the graduate and faculty levels.

GAANN Fellowships

In 2015, the U.S. Department of Education awarded EEB-UCSC a grant through their program for “Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need,” in recognition of EEB-UCSC’s high quality of graduate training and commitment to increasing diversity in the fields of ecology, evolutionary biology, and conservation.

Under the UCSC GAANN grant, We are currently recruiting PhD-track students from historically under-represented groups. GAANN fellows receive a competitive stipend (tuition fees covered), experience a rigorous training program in teaching, and they are also eligible for additional research and travel support.

For more information about the GAANN fellowships, contact Dr. Rila Mehta, rmehta2@ucsc.edu

What do EEB graduates do? More than 180 graduates of EEB-UCSC now teach and/or conduct research for academic institutions, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and the private sector throughout the United States and abroad. Many work actively to solve environmental problems.

Alumni Job Placement (5-Year Survey)

- 50% Academic Institutions
- 25% Government Agencies
- 10% Private Sector
- 5% M.A pursue Ph.D.
- 5% Unknown