

Rhode Island Sea Grant

Rhode Island Sea Grant's Community Engagement and Communications Fellowship

Overview

In our pursuit to support and train the next generation of coastal researchers, managers and leaders, Rhode Island Sea Grant (RISG) is excited to offer **three** graduate fellowship positions through our Community Engagement and Communications Fellowship Program in 2024. The purpose of this program is to provide students with hands-on opportunities to apply their knowledge to address real-world coastal management issues. Each fellowship opportunity will pair fellows with RISG-funded scientists, extension agents and state resources management professionals to develop solutions to the problems facing coastal and marine communities. Full descriptions of this year's fellowship positions can be found on the following page.

Fellowship opportunities for 2024 include:

1. RISG-Extension Resilient Communities and Economies Fellowship
2. RISG-Extension Fisheries and Aquaculture Fellowship
3. RISG Communications Fellowship

About the Fellowship

This half-time fellowship provides employment for Spring 2024 and Fall 2024 semesters during which the student is expected to work on campus at the URI Narragansett Bay Campus. The fellowship package includes half tuition for the academic year and a 10 hour-per-week stipend. **The fellowship is open to URI graduate students with strong written and verbal skills. To be eligible, students must be enrolled as full-time graduate students between January 1 and December 31, 2024.**

Application and Selection Process

All applicants must send completed application packages to Kim Ohnemus, RISG Workforce Development Coordinator, kohnemus@uri.edu.

Application packages must include (as PDF):

1. A cover page including applicant name, contact information, academic program/department, name of major professor/graduate director and which fellowship is being applied for,
2. A one-page letter describing applicant interest in the fellowship, career goals and how the experience would enhance their career objectives,
3. At least two (2) original writing samples,
4. Resume/CV,
5. At least one letter of reference (can be submitted separately).

Application deadline: Monday November 6, 2023

Following the application deadline, applications will be reviewed by the Workforce Development Coordinator and RI Sea Grant staff. Strong applicants will be invited to interview with fellowship mentors and RISG staff in late November/early December 2023. Fellowship decisions will be finalized in mid-December. The fellowship will officially begin in January 2024.

2024 CEC Fellowship Opportunities

1. RISG-Extension Resilient Communities and Economies Fellowship

Coastal resilience in Rhode Island is of paramount importance due to the state's extensive coastline, vulnerability to sea-level rise, and the increasing frequency of extreme weather events. As one of the most densely populated states in the U.S., with a significant portion of its population living along the coast, RI faces unique challenges and opportunities in its efforts to enhance coastal resilience.

This fellow will support coastal resilience extension activities, with a focus on applying relevant science to supporting tools (e.g. flood maps, policy development) and actions at the local, municipal level. The student will assist in the coastal resilience extension team's technical assistance that supports research, policy, GIS mapping/interactive Storymaps, decision support tools, and stakeholder engagement related to flooding and shoreline change from storms and rising seas. The student could assist in general work across multiple projects, and more specifically in the following ways:

- Support all aspects of the RI Climate Resilience Learning Network which is a community of practice that fosters knowledge exchange on enhancing climate community resilience against challenges. This collaborative effort equips municipalities and local decision-makers with dependable information and science-grounded advice concerning the potential risks to their communities, along with adaptive strategies for addressing climate change impacts.
- Assist shoreline monitoring volunteers who photograph flooding and damage through data synthesis to better understand the trends, communicating the science through written and visual products, and creating outreach products for volunteers and their communities to use for educating, decision making, and taking action. Learn more at: mycoast.org/ri.
- Support activities to build capacity of coastal municipalities and their residents, business, leaders and decision makers. This may include researching good practices or tools for sharing with partners, supporting meeting/workshop design and implementation, developing presentations and fact sheets. Learn more about these initiatives on the Providing Resilience Education for Planning in RI website: prep-ri.org
- Support public outreach and engagement with local communities on coastal resilience efforts and assist in developing communication materials to support the coastal resilience program.
- Research and report on topics of importance to coastal resilience for a variety of outlets/formats.
- Collaborate with Sea Grant extension, legal, research, and education portfolios in determining coastal community needs and opportunities.

2. RISG-Extension Fisheries and Aquaculture Fellowship

Rhode Island is the Ocean State, composed of communities dependent on the ocean and supporting a vibrant commercial and recreational fishing sector. The state has a demonstrated commitment to a sustainable and accessible coastal future for all; however, there are many different users of RI's waters and true and perceived user conflicts disrupt the balance of commercial and recreational uses of these coastal waters. While many Rhode Island organizations, state agencies and individuals are taking action to restore a balanced multi-use and sustainability of the resources, it is in an ongoing effort. Projects that the team (including the CEC Fellow) would be working towards completion include a ten-year update of the RI Shellfish Management Plan, Education program for Best Management Practices for floating aquaculture gear, shell recycling efforts and Restorative Aquaculture Webinar. The Extension Team at the Coastal Resources Center and RI Sea Grant would benefit from the assistance of a CEC fellow to support the work of such efforts.

In support of the fisheries and aquaculture project work, the 2024 CEC student would support the following tasks:

- Coordinate meetings, logistics, facilitation, and communications,
- Participate, share, and learn from meetings in RI and regionally (as needed),
- Assist the PI and Communications Leads in developing communication materials to support the fisheries and aquaculture work,
- Assist project partners at the RI Dept. of Environmental Management (RI DEM) or RI Coastal Resources Management Council (RI CRMC) to facilitate collection of necessary information and/or data necessary any project,
- Assist in any tasks that arise relating to the seafood portfolio, and
- Serving as liaison between student-led efforts/projects across the state and the RISG seafood portfolio work.

3. RISG Communications Fellowship

Rhode Island Sea Grant Communications seeks to foster a diverse, environmentally literate public that participates in lifelong learning opportunities related to oceans and coasts. We do this through publication of *41°N*, Rhode Island's Ocean and Coastal Magazine, in partnership with the URI Coastal Institute; through our website and social media channels; through public events; and through working in partnership with our Sea Grant-funded researchers and our extension, legal, and education programs. We have worked successfully with students from a variety of colleges and departments on projects that have included writing magazine articles, producing videos, conducting focus groups and surveys, redesigning our *41°N* magazine website, creating social media campaigns, and updating our shoreline-ri.com website.

Given the number of projects we are working on, our fellowship opportunity is flexible for the right candidate, who should have a specific interest in some aspect of fostering environmental literacy and ideas for working on projects such as marketing our magazine, websites or other content; conducting surveys to better understand audiences; fundraising to support our magazine; developing multimedia storytelling to share the results of research, extension, or legal program projects; or planning events that will reach new and diverse audiences. The right candidate will bring skills to the program as well as look to learn or develop new skills through mentoring. This candidate will also be able to work independently as well as take direction and collaborate with a team. This fellow will work directly with RISG's communications staff to meet project goals.

About Rhode Island Sea Grant

Rhode Island Sea Grant is one of 34 programs in the National Sea Grant College Program working to enhance environmental stewardship and long-term economic development and responsible use of coastal and marine resources. Located at the URI Graduate School of Oceanography, Rhode Island Sea Grant supports research, outreach, and education programs designed to foster the resiliency of local and regional communities and marine environments. Rhode Island Sea Grant also partners with the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center for our extension program, and with the Roger Williams University (RWU) School of Law on our legal program, located at the Marine Affairs Institute at RWU. The National Sea Grant College Program is a network of 34 programs nationwide representing partnerships between universities and the federal government's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Sea Grant directs federal resources to pressing problems in local communities by drawing on the experience of more than 3,000 scientists, engineers, public outreach experts, educators, and students from more than 300 institutions.