

# Climate Action Fellowship, 2021-2022

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## Introduction

The University of California, Santa Cruz is a distinguished institution that upholds the standards of maintaining an innovative, sustainable campus. Location right in the heart of a redwoods forest, the students of UCSC are provided the privilege to earn an education all whilst soaking in the nature our campus has to offer.

The undeniable energy of this campus has only solidified my faith and passion for widespread sustainable practices. From separated and labeled wasted stations to impressive Carbon Fund projects, there is always a more conscious option to remind others that being sustainable as a student is much easier than given credit for.

Through critically analyzing the intersectionality of my personal relationship with nature and society, I have found that I am extremely invested in the future of our planet and the role that comes with protecting it.

## Project Goals

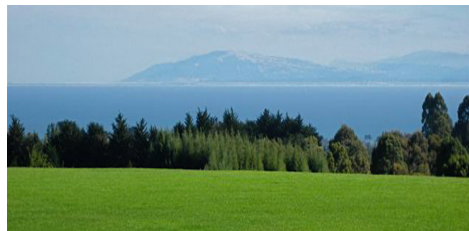
**Student-Led Climate Resilience Charge:** The CNI Fellowship comes with many empowering duties, one of which is to emphasize the role our student body has on the UC Resilience initiative. With the help of my supervisor, Ellen Vaughan, I introduced an open space for my peers, who come from a wide range of backgrounds, to discuss a vision for a resilient campus in order to advance UCSC's Climate Hazard Vulnerability Assessment.

**Materials and Methods:** With a framework provided by UC Office of the President, I was able to create an interactive workshop for students to partake in. It involved going over an introduction of the charge, climate risks specific to Santa Cruz, utilizing a hypothetical yet drastic climatic situation, opening the floor to all participants to express how they believe our campus will be impacted, and finally building up steps towards a more resilient campus through action planning and envisioning. I also requested a scribe be present during the workshops to ensure all feedback was on record and able to be shared with the Staff Advisory Support Team.

**Results and Outcomes:** Having the workshop mainly discussion based allowed for more reflection and collaboration with peers. I have held forums in the Sustainability Office, at the Inter-Org Retreat, Earth Day's Eco-Fest, and more. As of now, all input and suggestions are in safekeeping and are being taken into consideration for implementation in the coming year.



**Carbon Fund Committee:** The committee strives for a sustainable future by working to mitigate climate change through funding approximately \$130k annually in projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conduct relevant research, or carry out education and behavioral change programs. As a CNI Fellow, I stand as a representative of the Sustainability Office and have the power to vote on project proposals. As a voting member of this committee, I utilize my role by researching the numerous project proposals we receive in order to make intentional decisions on whether our pool of funding should be supporting the projects during the specific cycle. We can vote to fund the submission fully, partially, or suggest resubmission on a later cycle. Most of the time, there is an influx of proposals, and our budget simply cannot meet the means of each project.



**Athletics & Recreation Reserved Fund Committee:** As a member of this committee, I stand as a student representative of the Sustainability Office. I get firsthand updates on the projects our Athletics and Recreation Center is working on and thus, have a say in the execution of a project. For instance, it is recognized that water usage on the grounds of campus presents an opportunity for efficiency and existing water conservation practices are not aligning with the state of the drought. These discussions led to my investigation of sustainable, artificial turf. It comes with many benefits in addition to reduced water usage, such as the elimination of pesticides, germs and runoff, to name a few. It is also highly resistant to wear and tear despite the product being available to use all year round. With all my previous research on bringing in turf to campus, I suggested Shaw Sport Turf's Legion NXT Turf System, which has a Geofill consisting of 90% coconut and 10% naturally derived plant-based matter. Currently, the East Field is in the process of consultations with different turf vendors and preparing for installation this summer. Regardless of the outcome, my presence on the committee has allowed me to contribute to discussions I otherwise would be unable to partake in.

As a CNI Fellow, I have had the opportunity to tackle campus-wide gaps in sustainability with the help of outreach projects and proposals. Being as it is my second and final year as a fellow with my work having been primarily remote, I am proud to have made strides within different departments to help progress the Sustainability Office's relevance, even during an ongoing pandemic.

This simple fact goes to show how significant sustainability is the future. It is the one lifestyle every individual should be striving to perfect through education, awareness, and inclusion. It is the least we can do for our planet that houses us with the richest, most irreplaceable lives. That sort of enriching experience is one we could never duplicate elsewhere.



## Future Goals

My upcoming goals include proceeding with my CNI Fellowship position in the next school year to follow out with more projects pertaining to engagement and research. I hope to continue to play a role in the Carbon Fund to further our UC campus-wide goal of becoming entirely carbon neutral by 2025.

Despite this school year being a continuation of the last with many trials and tribulations due to a hectic pandemic and a series of heart wrenching world events, my optimism remains high. I believe there is still lots to be thrilled about for our future and I only wish UCSC continues to grow its appreciation for this initiative.



## Acknowledgements

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