Climate Resilience Planning in Santa Paula
Bren Environmental Leadership Program Summer Fellowship

Project Background
The Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy (CAUSE) is a nonprofit organization working with community members along the Central Coast of California to advocate for policies and changes that would positively impact them. Santa Paula is a small city in the Santa Clara Valley of Ventura County. It is surrounded by mountains, fields, undeveloped land, and the Santa Clara River. CAUSE is working with youth, immigrant families, and farmworkers in Santa Paula to make the community more climate resilient. Santa Paula residents experience flooding and extreme heat yet have little to no resources to mitigate or cope as these events intensify with climate change. Rainwater floods the lower parts of town, damaging homes and cars and threatening the lives of unhoused residents. Temperatures reach above 90°F for over three weeks each year, and the number of weeks is projected to nearly double in 40 years. Many residences, businesses, and schools are not equipped with cooling systems, and students lose instructional time because of extreme heat.

This research project focuses on identifying climate resilience measures to address flooding and extreme heat in the Santa Paula community. The student will work alongside a Bren graduate student mentor to gather information about existing climate resilience strategies and research models for developing a climate resilience center in Santa Paula/Ventura County. Working alongside CAUSE staff, the project team will attend focus groups with community members to discuss their needs, identify what support and services are needed, and determine how to make a physical center feel safe and accessible to all residents, especially undocumented residents who are left out of disaster relief. To culminate, the project team will host a community workshop to present this research to community members and assist CAUSE Staff in developing a report that details the physical and social infrastructure necessary for effective climate resilience in frontline communities.

Qualifications
- Interest and enthusiasm for environmental justice, especially climate resilience
- Can work independently and as part of a team
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Experience interacting with diverse groups and/or communities preferred
- Spanish language ability and familiarity with the Santa Paula community preferred

Details
The position is 10 weeks, 35 hours per week, with exact dates flexible between late June to mid-September. Most work can be conducted remotely, with in-person opportunities in Santa Paula pending student location and partner availability. Payment is $18.57/hour. This position is part of the Bren Environmental Leadership (BEL) Program – the student will participate in professional development training during the summer and a poster session at the Mantell Symposium on Environmental Justice and Conservation Innovation in Fall 2024.
Eligibility
This position is supported through UCSB’s Center for Equitable Environmental Sciences (CEES), which advances environmental justice in STEM and cultivates community partnerships. Applicants must be full-time continuing UCSB undergraduate students (not graduating within 2024 calendar year) with California resident classification and eligibility to work in the United States. Priority will be given to students who demonstrate financial need, are first-generation college students, and/or identify as being from a group underrepresented in their discipline.

How to Apply
Please submit applications to this form by March 31 at 11:59 pm. Applications should include:

- A cover letter describing why you are interested in the project and how your experience and qualifications make you a good fit for the position. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment and supporting diverse students in environmental science, including those from underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation college backgrounds, and/or those active in DEI, EJ, or social justice. Please include insights into how your experiences or perspective might shape your contribution to the BEL community.
- A resume or CV, including any relevant coursework and previous experience