

**SONOMA
STATE
UNIVERSITY**

CENTER FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL
INQUIRY

A close-up photograph of a person's open palm holding two snakes. One snake is black with orange spots, and the other is orange with black spots. The person's face is blurred in the background.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

2024

Education Into Action



How do we find solutions to the earth's challenges at a time when our world is so highly polarized? Instead of emphasizing our differences, let's roll up our sleeves and work together to find solutions.

Inside we show you how CEI builds community **across cultures**, **across sectors**, and **across disciplines**. We bring you stories of students of all ages connecting to nature, working on environmental challenges, and emerging as civic leaders.

We hope you will find inspiration in these stories, and learn more about the local challenges we are working on together.

Let's get environmentally ready!

- Building connections with land & people
- Learning crucial skills
- Getting experience working on solutions

Claudia Luke

Dr. Claudia Luke, Director



ACROSS CULTURES

Why diverse perspectives matter

Open and inclusive conversation among people of diverse cultures and backgrounds is the foundation of innovative ideas and practical solutions.

CEI creates spaces dedicated to bringing people of all backgrounds together to discuss environmental challenges.



Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR) Chairman Greg Sarris (left) and former SSU President Mike Lee cut the ribbon at the opening of the new FIGR Learning Center at the Osborn Preserve. FIGR donated \$2.8 M to support the renovation. The new facility launches a long-term partnership between SSU and the tribe.

ACROSS CULTURES



Dedicated to Dialogue

Visitors gathered in the circle at the newly renovated Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR) Learning Center at the Osborn Preserve.

The new circle is dedicated to hosting conversations across cultures, sectors, and disciplines that address environmental issues. The location ensures that the environment itself has a seat at the table.

The FIGR Learning Center is open to all people engaging in environmental discussion, education, and research.

More about:

Preserve events: cei.sonoma.edu/calendar

Reservations: cei.sonoma.edu/preserves

SSU students met virtually with researchers in South Africa and the U.S. about the importance of elephant and bison grazing in maintaining grassland ecosystems. Participating students said the event changed their perception of research — who does it and how it's done — and increased their interest in environmental careers.

CEI's "Live from the Field (LFTF)" series creates virtual spaces for students to talk informally with field scientists and learn about their lives, challenges, and motivations.

More about LFTF: thevirtualfield.org/virtual-visits



Global Viewpoints

ACROSS SECTORS

Why we need leaders who can communicate

The environmental challenges we face today are fundamentally cultural and economic. So to find solutions, we must work with leaders across all sectors of society.

CEI creates opportunities for students to work with leaders from a wide variety of sectors on regional sustainability issues.



Pamela Cruz, 2024 graduate of SSU's Hutchins School of Liberal Studies, led a discussion with community leaders about environmental perspectives. She says we need "new opportunities for dialogue where nature is integral to the conversation."

ACROSS SECTORS



Water Work

Students Amber Kaljumagi and Lily Roberts discussed their findings on homelessness and water quality with Sonoma Water General Manager Grant Davis at the 2024 prestigious North Bay Watershed Association conference. CEI hosted the conference at SSU, bringing together students and professionals from municipal, educational, and environmental sectors.

The students' research — funded by CEI's Education Into Action initiative — did not find a clear link between reduced water quality and the activities of people experiencing homelessness. A new academic–industry collaboration is underway to pin down the causes of elevated bacteria levels.

Learn more: cei.sonoma.edu/do-project/rising-waters

CEI Program Lead Chris Halle advised California's Sustainable Growth Council on ways to accelerate the translation of environmental research into community action. The report — undertaken by a team of CSU experts — recommended that funding agencies invest in multi-year projects that empower both real-world research and collaborative implementation of pilot projects in communities.

CEI's Education into Action program was used by the team as a model for productive university–community collaborations.

More about Ed into Action: cei.sonoma.edu/projects



In Action

ACROSS DISCIPLINES

How talking across disciplines moves us forward

Every discipline — whether science, philosophy, history, business, or art — is intimately connected to life on this planet.

CEI helps learners of all ages cross artificial disciplinary boundaries and discover how their field of study is integral to advancing environmental initiatives.

At a writing workshop in SSU's Native Plant Garden, students and community members improved their writing skills by exploring their connection to nature. The workshop was led by former SSU English Professor Lakin Khan.

CEI's Dig Into Nature public event series hosts 40 events each year in a wide variety of disciplines.



ACROSS DISCIPLINES



Campus Corridor

Students from all majors worked together to restore natural and agricultural lands right on SSU's campus. The roughly 15-acre "campus corridor" includes Copeland Creek, the native plant garden, and the eco-ag garden.

CEI is collaborating with faculty and regional partners to promote this area of campus as an outdoor classroom — where students from all disciplines can develop and implement solutions on water management, biodiversity, and health and well-being.

More about the Campus Nature Corridor:
cei.sonoma.edu/nature-corridor

CEI Director Claudia Luke co-hosted workshops in the U.S. and Costa Rica, showing land managers and faculty how virtual technology can get everyone out into nature — any time of year and anywhere on the planet.

The Virtual Field project — founded by CEI and engaging more than 30 universities — is one of the first to use virtual environmental experiences to build observation and critical thinking skills. Two NSF grants are expanding use of these virtual tools in classrooms at minority-serving institutions where barriers to in-person field experiences are high.

More about The Virtual Field: thevirtualfield.org



Virtual Travel

2024 IMPACT

Academic Engagement

1,241 Students + **5,319** Virtually

101 Faculty + **1,348** Virtually

31 Disciplines: Architecture, Art, Music, Education, Business, Electrical Engineering, Communication, Chemistry, English, Psychology, Public Health, Geology, Computer Science...

Community Connections

257 Project Partners (cei.sonoma.edu/about/partners)

1,411 K-12 Students & Teachers

1,563 Community Participants

More details: cei.sonoma.edu/about

CEI PRESERVE PROJECTS

Fairfield Osborn Preserve — 450 acres

- Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria Learning Center
- Effects of fuel reduction under transmission lines on pollinator diversity
- Grassland fuel reduction & restoration

Galbreath Wildlands Preserve — 3,670 acres

- In-stream habitat improvements for salmon populations
- Prescribed burn permitting & public outreach
- Fuel reduction for safety & oak woodland conservation

Los Guillicos Preserve — 40 acres

- Forest fuel reduction after the Glass Fire

SSU Campus

- Native Plant Garden restoration
- Copeland Creek riparian restoration

CEI PROGRAMS

Curriculum Development

- Virtual Field Mentoring & Skill-Building Modules
- Sponsored SSU Courses
- Water Research, Plant Propagation, Land & Water Planning
- Faculty Learning Communities

Leadership Trainings

- Land Management Training & Practice
- Environmental Education Training & Practice

Student-Community Research

- ***NEW** State Agency Recommendations for Transforming Research into Community Projects
- Rising Waters: Studies in Water Resilience
- Fire Up: Studies in Fire Resilience
- ***NEW** Forest Futures: Studies in Emerging Forest Challenges
- Studies in Preserve Operations
- Grants in Water & Field Research

Green Jobs

- ***NEW** Forestry Career Transitions
- CEI Student Jobs: Preserve Stewardship, Restoration, Garden Stewardship, Marketing, Dual Agency Water Internship

Action for All Ages

- Public Workshops: Dig-Into-Nature Series
- Elementary Schools: Osborn Tours Program
- K-12 Teacher Training Institutes

STUDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

Fire — 6 projects

Water — 8 projects

Air & Climate — 2 projects

Biodiversity — 25 projects

Environmental Learning — 7 projects

More details: cei.sonoma.edu/projects/search

2025 GOALS

Your help allows us to turn an SSU education into environmental action.

Our goal is to give every student a transformative experience studying the environment through the lens of their discipline.

We need your help to:

Connect all students to local ecosystems.

Reach half of all students with an environmental **skill-building** experience.

Give one quarter of all students **experience** working on environmental challenges in their discipline of choice.

Provide every student with information on green jobs and **job greening**.

**Join us by
volunteering,
participating,
or donating!**



Donors & Volunteers

Thank you to all of our supporters for investing in an environmentally-ready generation. (cei.sonoma.edu/about/supporters)

VISIONARIES (Lifetime)

\$100,000 & above

Cotati/Rohnert Park
Unified School District

The Federated Indians
of Graton Rancheria
Tribal Council

Fred & Jean Galbreath

Robert & Sue Johnson

Marthe & Stephen
Norwick

Joan & William Roth

Anonymous

BENEFACTORS

\$20,000–\$99,000

Carol Cole Mitchel &
Clark F. Mitchel

Anonymous

PIONEERS

\$5,000–\$19,999

Mike & Paula Aja

Tyler Brown & Kathryn
Peyton

Anonymous

EXPLORERS

\$1,000–\$4,999

Tom Cavers & Sol
Garay

Nancy & Dale
Dougherty

Susan Norwick
Horrocks & Keith
Horrocks

Richard & Johanna
Luke

Barbara & Jake
Mackenzie

Santa Rosa Garden
Club

Cathy & Chuck
Williamson

Terri & David Yost

Anonymous

GUIDES

\$25–\$999

John Branscome

Annemarie & Matt
Brown

Ruth Burke

Edward Culberson &
Elizabeth Lotz

Gwendolyn P. Dhesi

Douglas Emery & Molly
Eckler

Paul & Dorothea Geiger

Judith Ochs Giampaoli
& Mark Giampaoli

Kandis Gilmore &
Albert Longboy

Susan & Joseph Gorin

Adrienne & Ray
Grechman

Paula Hammett &
Robert Hope, III

Happy Platypus Fund
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Diane V. Hichwa

Heike Hiss

Sharon & A.J. Janulaw

Sachiko & Michael
Knappman

Charlene & Michael
Lennon

Howard Liebman &
Ilene C. Weitz

Elizabeth Manwaring &
David Prothero

Michael Murphy

Nicole Myers

Cynthia Starkweather
Peterson & Bruce
Peterson

Mark & Margot Rawlins

Bruce Reinik & Mary
Roberts

John Sheehy & Laurie
Szujewska

Whitney Sparks

Hugh Stevenson
& Diane Paleczny-
Stevenson

Kirsten & Steve Tellez

Raye Thomas

Warren & Janis Watkins

Richard Whitkus

Kerry Winingar

Ella Wong

Jacob Yarrow

Anonymous

LEGACY & ENDOWED GIFTS

Fred & Jean Galbreath

Marthe Norwick

Georgette Skellenger

Anonymous

Cali Pearce joined CEI in August as our new Preserves Manager to help set up a new forestry career transition program and coordinate activities and projects at the SSU preserves and native plant garden. Cali graduated with honors in environmental science from Flagler College and worked with AmeriCorps and the Sonoma Ecology Center before joining CEI.



Operations

Revenue

- 4% Endowments
- 8% Individual Donations
- 25% SSU/CSU
- 63% Corporate Partners & Agencies

Total: \$1,406,851

Expenditures

- 4% Communications
- 6% Operations
- 6% Lands & Facilities
- 84% Programs

Total: \$1,284,051

Staff

Gina Baleria, EdD,
Strategic Communications

Andy Balestracci,
Galbreath Operations Lead

Suzanne DeCoursey, MS,
Education Manager

Aline Fromme,
Administrative Analyst

Chris Halle, PhD,
Project Development Lead

Claudia Luke, PhD,
Director

Cali Pearce,
Preserves Manager

Margot Rawlins,
Galbreath Program Coordinator

Kerry Winingar, MS,
Outreach & Project Development Lead

Julie Wittmann, MS,
Community Naturalist Coordinator

Heidi Herrmann, MA,
Native Plant Garden Coordinator

Project Employees

The Virtual Field Project: Sara Kassis, Veda Dean, Maya Siegal

Student Assistants: Jesse Block, Veda Dean, Mika Di Lello, Ursula Hongisto, Claudia Mayo, Mimi Meacham, Tristan Niles, Bryan Peeso, Jesse Schmiege, Liza Schoen, Lily Sells, Millie Strawn, Shin Tadokoro, Tessa Thompson, Freddie White, Roxanne Wilkerson, Chloe Winsemius, Oliver Ziemer

Recent Graduates: Fiona Javete, Melia Zimmerman, Christine Anderson

Photographers: Kieran Friedman, Scott Gibson, Kerry Winingar

Moth on back cover photo by: Don Lori

Turning Education into Action

All programs are supported by contributions





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