UROC Innovation Scholars

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (UROC)

Natasha Oehlman & Angelica Alcazar

HSI Innovation Hub ~ *Cultivating Comunidad~*

Strengthening Ties Through Research, Innovation and Funding

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Cal State Monterey Bay

CSU Monterey Bay (Mid-Size)

- Founded on Former Fort Ord Military Base (converted in 1994)
- Predominantly undergraduate (25 undergraduate degrees; 9 graduate majors)
- Designated Hispanic- Serving Institution (HSI)
- 7,200 students

CSUMB Student Body

Demographics

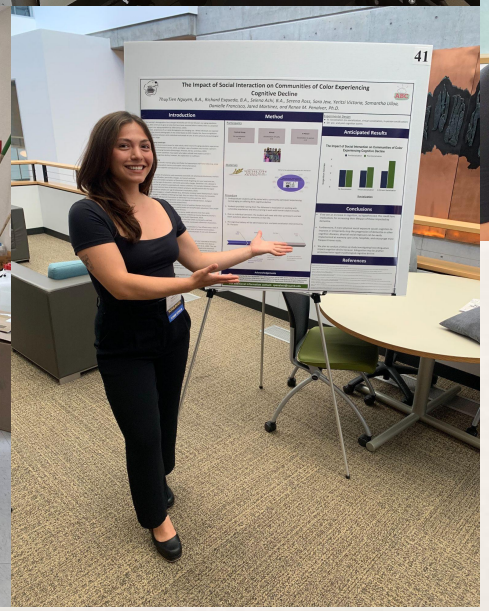
- 38% of undergraduates are from Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties
- 53% are first generation; 50% Underrepresented Minority
- 72% of students receive financial aid
- 52% percent of our students living on campus.

Cal State Monterey Bay

The **Undergraduate Research Opportunities Center (UROC)** at CSUMB is a cross-campus center that engages students in **undergraduate research and scholarship**.

Cal State Monterey Bay

Research In the Disciplines

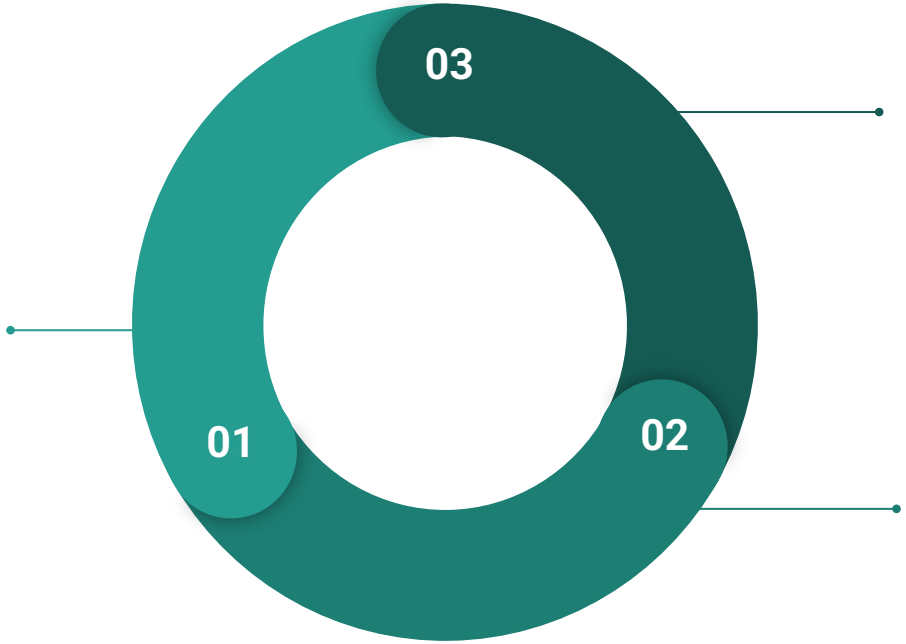


Cal State Monterey Bay

Centering UG Research

Career/Workforce

Undergraduate research provides students with important experiences and networking opportunities with professionals in their field.



Knowledge

Research helps bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application of knowledge.

Grad School

Participating in research will help a competitive edge when applying for graduate schools

NACE CENTER

National Association of Colleges and Employers

Cal State Monterey Bay

Fellowships

BARRY GOLDWATER
SCHOLARSHIP & EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Knight-Hennessy Scholars
Stanford University

SALLY CASANOVA
PRE-DOC

GRFP
NSF GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Udall Foundation
CIVILITY, INTEGRITY, CONSENSUS

FULBRIGHT
U.S. Student Program

Cal State
Monterey Bay

UROC Programs

Research Rookies	Exploratory, self-paced, research introduction.
UROC Researchers	1-semester commitment.
Koret Scholars	1-year commitment, social science focus, cohort-model *structured for students intending to go to graduate school.
UROC Scholars / McNair Scholars	2-year commitment, 4 courses, intensive, cohort-model *structured for students intending to apply to doctoral programs.
UROC Innovation Scholars	3-semester commitment, structured intensive cohort Aim: to support Latinx academic persistence and career readiness in STEAM.

Cal State Monterey Bay

UROC Innovation Scholars

Cal State Monterey Bay

Program Goals

- Improve retention and graduation rates for Hispanic STEAM students
- Help students create a STEAM identity
- Help students promote themselves for grad school/STEAM workforce
- Help students develop valuable research and tech skills
- Create a sense of belonging for students in STEAM and research

Cal State Monterey Bay

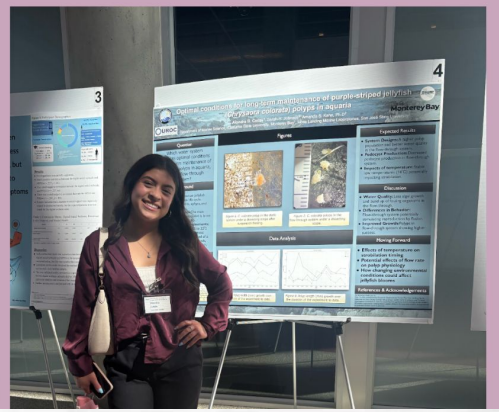
Programming

- Provide technology (Apple products, laptop, ipad, pencil)
- Facilitate workshops and direct peer support for e-portfolio development.
  - Monthly meeting with the Apple Educator Team
  - Peer mentoring.
- Faculty-mentored research.
- Funding to present at national conferences and meetings.
- New: *Otterly Curious* Podcast to highlight research voices.
- Supporting 36 unique students over two years of funding.

Cal State Monterey Bay

Eportfolios: STEAM Identity

I am a first-generation Latin-x college student majoring in Psychology at California State University, Monterey Bay. Being a part of the LGBTQ_ and Deaf community, I have accomplished many things like, achieving two associate's degree in psychology and in Behavioral Science at Modesto Junior College. As a Psychology major and Innovation Scholar at CSUMB, I've had the unique opportunity to apply both analytical and creative thinking across academic, research, and collaborative environments. Through roles such as a student assistant with the Student Disability and Accessibility Center (SDAC), an undergraduate researcher with UROC, and an Innovation Scholar, I've been able to integrate my passion for understanding human behavior with research experiences that explore cognitive, emotional, and social processes across diverse contexts. This ePortfolio showcases my development as an undergraduate researcher and highlights the academic and experiential milestones that have shaped my journey.



Hello! My name is Alondra Casas Navarro and I'm an undergraduate student at California State University, Monterey Bay majoring in marine science with a minor in cinematic arts & technology, and a strong background in chemistry. I'm from Santa Clarita, CA and I have been passionate about Marine Science since I was a young girl. One of the things I love most about the ocean is how much we don't know about it (yet). Some of my other interests are music, getting out of my comfort zone, and photography.

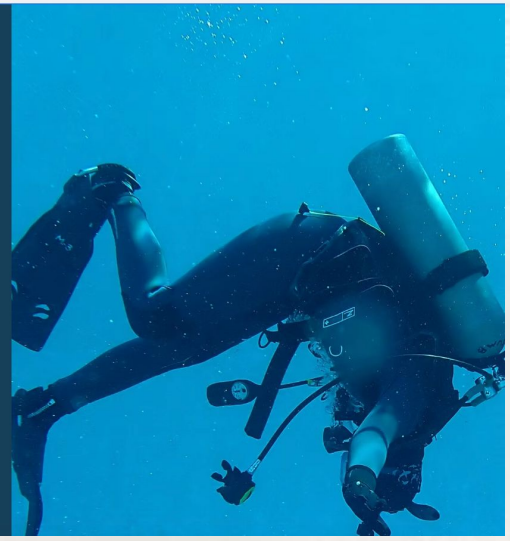
My research experience has been with a variety of marine life. This includes studying the environmental impacts on Sea Turtle reproduction in Costa Rica, specifically Olive Ridley sea turtles, Green sea turtles and Leatherback sea turtles. I have also studied human disturbance and anthropogenic effects on Sea Otter populations in the Monterey Bay area. However my passion doesn't stop there as some of my other interests include: marine mammal ecology, conservation biology, and the environmental and ecological

Diving In

Read More

Welcome to my Portfolio!

I'm an undergraduate Marine Science student at CSU Monterey Bay, and this site is a space to share my academic journey, hands-on experiences, and professional goals. From coursework and research to diving certifications and outreach work, this profile highlights the skills, projects, and passions that shape who I am as a student, scientist, and communicator. Whether you're here to explore my work, learn about my background, or connect professionally, thank you for visiting!



Achsah Jojo
Cal State Monterey Bay
ajojo@csumb.edu
AI Auto Completion: Your Debugging Frenemy

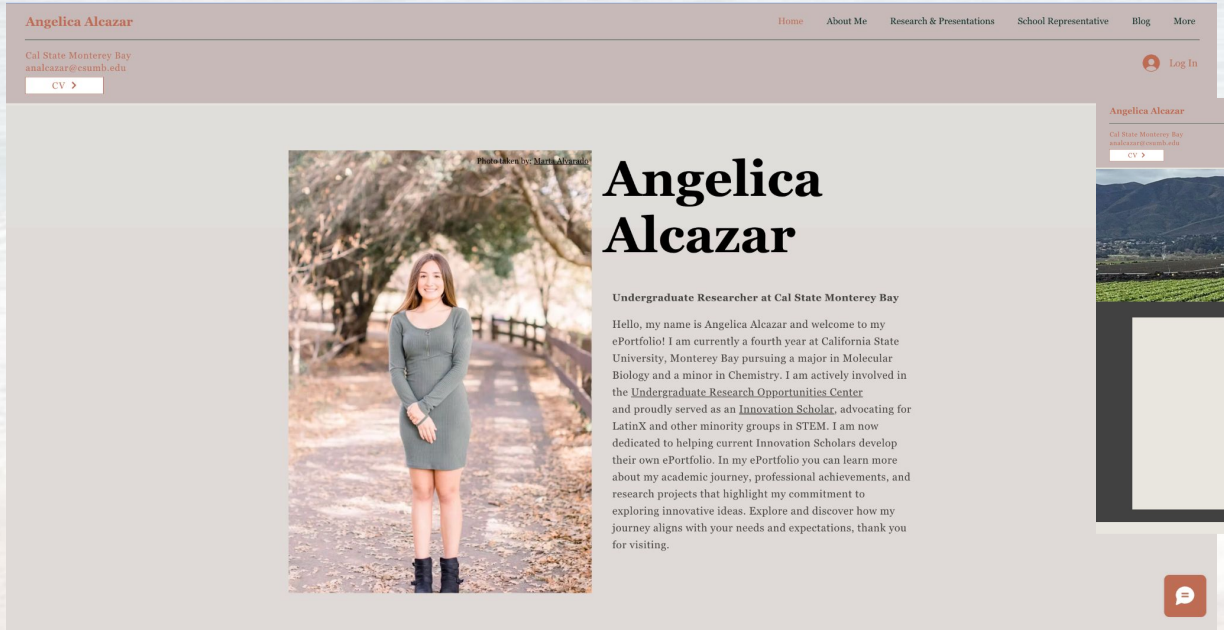
Home About Me Resume Research Blog Projects Contact

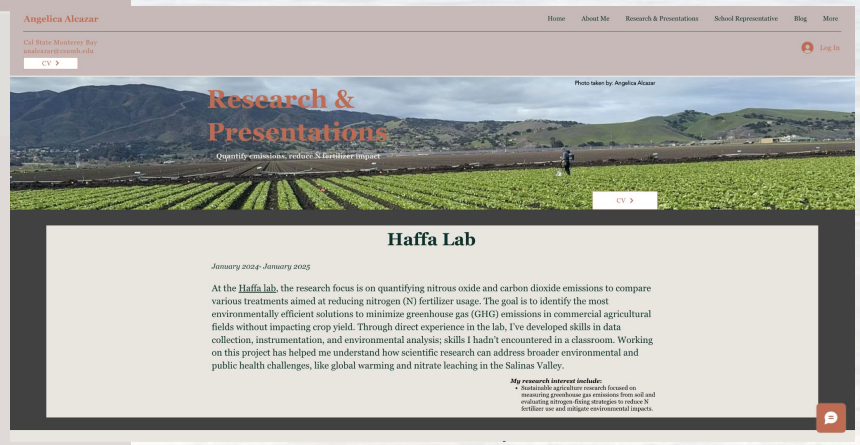
Achsah Jojo

Artificial Intelligence Researcher

Let's Chat!

Explore the Journey





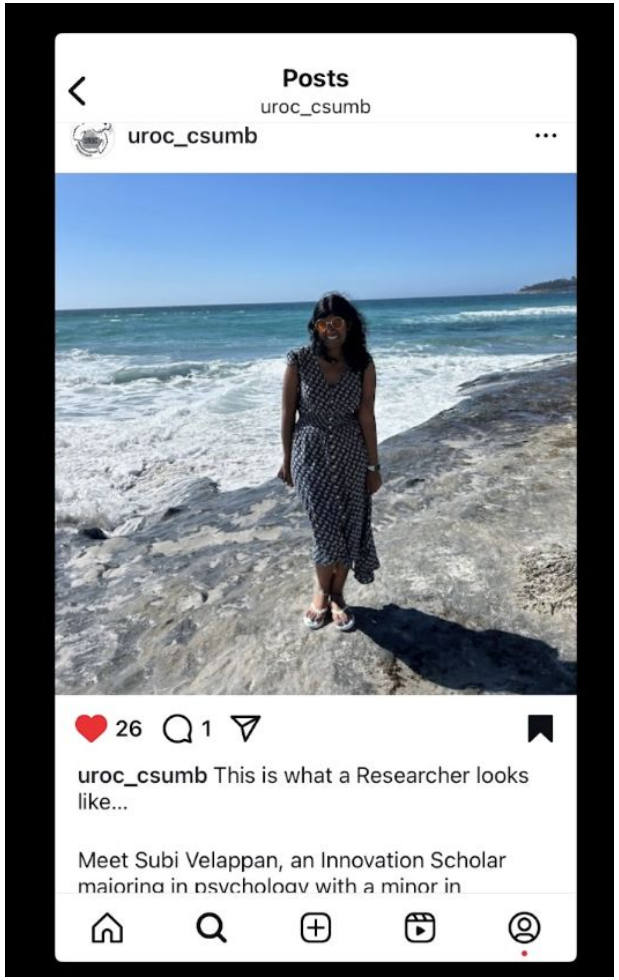
Learn more here!

Cal State Monterey Bay

Cultivating Scholar Identity

2024 GMiS - Rafael L.S. Reis Story

I'm thrilled to share that my team won **2nd place at the NASA-sponsored STEM Zone Competition at Great Minds in STEM!** Working alongside such talented individuals was an incredible experience, and I deeply appreciate my amazing teammates for their hard work and dedication. I also had the honor of presenting my research, titled "Impact of Energy Consumption Awareness on Student Programming Efficiency and Ethics," which explores how making students aware of the energy impact of their programs can influence their programming practices and ethical considerations. This project was made possible thanks to the invaluable guidance of my PI, Dr. Joshua Gross, whose support and mentorship have been instrumental in shaping my research. Additionally, I am honored to have been awarded a scholarship as part of the prize.



Spring 2025 Themes

Professional and Academic Support

Significant growth in professional development, research experience, and academic clarity.

Program **pivotal in shaping** their career such as: graduate school pathway, securing employment, or refining their research identity.

Students frequently mentioned **support with applications,** CV development, and research communication skills as standout elements.

Strong Mentorship and Support

Students appreciated staff **approachability, commitment, and personalized support** in both academic and logistical areas.

Community and Belonging

Transfer students and those new to research emphasized the **importance of the program's community-building focus.**

Sense of belonging **often translated** into **greater confidence** in research settings.

Cal State Monterey Bay

Spring 2025 Themes

Confidence in Science Communication

Confidence in scientific communication:

Boosting their confidence, refining their communication skills, and enabling them to **clearly and effectively** share their research ideas to a varied audience.

Conference and Dissemination

Benefited from opportunities to **travel to conferences** and competitions **broadening** professional networks.

Experiences **were especially meaningful** for **first-time researchers in STEM**.

UROC should continue travel funding and conference support.

Apple Technology

Apple devices (iPads, MacBooks, Apple Pencils) integrated into academic workflows. **Portability** favored.

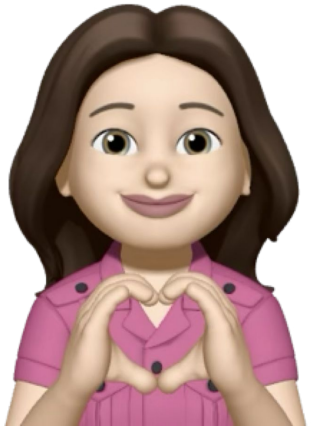
Discovered new creative capabilities (e.g., photo editing, professional image capture) that **enriched their professional materials** and presentations.

CalState MontereyBay

Student Responses (Spring 25)

Stephanie (Effy)

“The program has empowered me to embrace my identity as a person of color, a woman in STEM, and a first-generation student. Before joining, I struggled with imposter syndrome, but through this experience, I gained the confidence to recognize my place in these spaces.”



Alondra

“A big part of research is my identity because I want to be a good representation to my community [the hispanic community] and be able to connect my background to my future.”

Cal State Monterey Bay

Otterly Curious ~ Podcast

"Realizing and understanding radical social theory"
– Jourdan Garnier

"Creating a brighter future one seed at a time"
- Joe Perez

"AI Auto Completion: Your Debugging Frenemy."
– Achsah Jojo

"Quantify emissions, reduce N fertilizer impact"
– Angelica Alcazar

- 5 episodes
- 2 peer mentors

"Small invaders can create huge impacts"
– Liam Campbell

"

Cal State Monterey Bay

Questions for us?

@UROC_CSUMB

Cal State Monterey Bay