



## CI Receives New Environmental Designation

Camarillo, Calif., March 17, 2010 - CSU Channel Islands (CI) was recently designated a California Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU). The individual CESUs are part of the national network of CESUs, acting as cooperative partnerships between universities and various federal agencies.

When a federal agency partners with a university on a project, the agency provides scientific staff, administrative support funds and project funds for specific research projects, and technical assistance. The federal entities involved in the program are the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Department of Defense, plus all of the agencies that fall under each of these departments. In California, seven CSU campuses are designated as CESUs.

The CESU is compatible with CI's multidisciplinary approach to education and emphasis on service learning and civic engagement. Dr. Donald Rodriguez, Associate Professor and Chair of the Environmental Science and Resource Management Program at CI, stated that the University's geographical location, adjacent to critical wildlife habitat, urban, mountain, agricultural and ocean environments, makes it valuable in many types of environmental studies.

Rodriguez mentioned that CI is currently seeking to develop a deeper integration with local and federal land management agencies and to develop curricula integrating CI students into Park Service monitoring efforts on the mainland and on offshore islands. In the fall of 2009, in partnership with Channel Islands National Park, students worked with park staff on a park restoration project on Anacapa Island. The University received a grant from the Park Service to participate in the project.

In another cooperative effort, supervisor of the Channel Islands National Park, Russell Galipeau, co-teaches a class with Rodriguez and Dan Wakelee, Associate Dean of Faculty at CI. The National Park Service and National Park Foundation see these joint endeavors as a dynamic way to interest students in getting involved and interested in issues of park management, preservation and sustainability.

CI students and faculty also work on many different projects with agencies like the Minerals Management Service, the California Regional Water Quality Board, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the County Resource Conservation District, and the United Nations.

Rodriguez stated, "I want to get the student population interested in environmental science and resource management. The CESU designation provides students with on the

ground experience in a full range of existing projects where they can meet and work with professionals in the field."

Rodriguez noted that CI students develop contacts in their fields of interest and graduate with much better prospects for getting the kind of job they want. "It's worthwhile to note that ninety per cent of the students graduating in our program go on to work in an environmentally-related field. The environment and sustainability are major issues of the 21st century economy, and stewardship and developing a green workforce will be seen as good business practice."

For further information on the CESU program at CI, contact Dr. Donald Rodriguez, Associate Professor and Chair of the Environmental Science and Resource Management Program at CSU Channel Islands at 805-437-8494 or [donald.rodriguez@csuci.edu](mailto:donald.rodriguez@csuci.edu)

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*CSU Channel Islands is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.*

*CSUCI Mission Statement*

*Placing students at the center of the educational experience, California State University Channel Islands provides undergraduate and graduate education that facilitates learning within and across disciplines through integrative approaches, emphasizes experiential and service learning, and graduates students with multicultural and international perspectives.*