

# UC Davis Students and Researchers in Loreto, Baja California



A new Sister Reserve of the University of California's Natural Reserve System has been established in Loreto, Baja California Sur, Mexico. This new partnership provides unique opportunities for UC Davis students and researchers to work with Mexican partners in this rich and beautiful natural laboratory.

UC Davis has taken the lead in this initiative in Loreto, partnering with Eco-Alianza de Loreto, A.C. and other cooperating Mexican universities, institutes, and organizations. UC researchers and students have begun working in the Loreto area, and Eco-Alianza is now planning construction of a new field station – Centro de Estudios del Medio Ambiente, or CEMA – in Loreto.

Loreto lies at the nexus between the rich marine resources of the Gulf of California and the wild and largely unstudied expanses of the southern and

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central Baja California peninsula. In particular, the islands and waters of Bahía de Loreto National Park have been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. And the town of Loreto was designated a “Pueblo Magico” for its natural beauty, unique history, and culture.

The new UC Sister Reserve and CEMA field station are designed to help inform conservation and decision-making in the Bay of Loreto region and across Baja California Sur. Goals are to safeguard natural resources as well as improve local livelihoods through sustainable social and economic alternatives and advance regional science education.

A central element of the efforts in Loreto is to facilitate cross-border partnerships and capacity-building. This initiative has been built from the ground up as a partnership between the UC and Eco-Alianza, cooperating Mexican universities, and a constellation of governmental and not-for-profit conservation and management groups. Success of this initiative will mean cross-border collaborative research teams and joint field classes consisting of US and Mexican students working side-by-side on the waters, islands, and landscapes of Bahía de Loreto and across Baja California.

**Philanthropic giving to UC Davis and the Loreto research initiative engages our faculty and students in research, conservation, and sustainable-development opportunities in Baja California.**

***Current Funding Needs:***

- **Scientist-in-Residence Program.** Loreto welcomes UC faculty with open arms, providing an expansive natural laboratory for field research and many opportunities for engagement with local partners and residents. The Loreto Scientist-in-Residence program would bring UC scientists to Baja California for 2-month stays focusing on baseline scientific research and establishing long-term partnerships in the region.
- **Graduate Student Research Awards.** Graduate student researchers are the cutting edge of field research and are the scientific leaders of tomorrow. Individual awards for travel and field expenses can alter a graduate student's professional trajectory and enable student research that otherwise would not be possible.
- **Undergraduate Field-Class Initiative.** Especially in the wake of the Covid pandemic, undergraduate students have been deprived of real-world field experiences. Field sciences such as

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ecology, geology, and marine science require immersive field training and experience. We seek to establish a fund for field education in the Bahía de Loreto region, emphasizing cooperative and bilateral groups of UC and Mexican undergraduate students.

- **Research and Education Infrastructure in Loreto.** Acquisition of land and construction of the new CEMA facility in Loreto is being led, and generously funded, by UC Davis's local partners. However, there is pressing need for laboratory and analytical equipment to support the university's ambitious research and educational agenda in the region.

### ***Endowed Funds: A Lasting Impact***

Each year, a portion of the income from an endowed fund is spent to support the donor's stated purpose and advance the Loreto Research Project's mission, **leaving the principal untouched**. Another part of the income is reinvested in the principal, **growing its value into the future**. The market value of UC Davis' endowments have **tripled over the past decade**—thanks to newly created endowed funds, additions to current endowments and strong investment returns.

- **Endowed Chair for Baja California Conservation Science.** A \$2 million named chair will establish UC Davis leadership in protecting the rich natural resources of Baja California. Named endowments support the faculty member's efforts at a career-long scale, and in perpetuity, including research, policy engagement, and fostering graduate and undergraduate student education and development.
- **Endowed Research Fund.** A \$1 million named research fund will provide annual research support for timely and urgent research in areas such as the geology, ecology, and marine science of the Gulf of California-Baja California Sur region. These funds will lead to management-focused research to guide local policy, new journal publications, and potentially targeted field expeditions or international research conferences.
- **Endowed Graduate Fellowship.** A \$200,000 named graduate fellowship will provide funding for one graduate fellow annually to support targeted engagement in the Bahía de Loreto area, including research, field education, engagement with US and Mexican undergraduate students, and promoting sustainable economic development in and around Loreto.
- **Named Lecture Series.** A \$150,000 named lecture series would provide ongoing funding for one to three annual speakers discussing or convening discussions regarding Loreto and Baja conservation challenges and research, potentially including bringing UC scientists to Loreto and/or bringing Mexican scientists to UC campuses.

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