

**Fiscal Year 2024 National Sea Grant College Program  
Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship**

The Sea Grant Act includes a legislative mandate to provide an educational experience in the policies and processes of the Legislative and Executive Branches of the Federal Government. This fellowship is available for students enrolled in graduate or professional programs that have an interest in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources. In 1979, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) National Sea Grant College Program initiated the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program to help fulfill its broad educational responsibilities and meet this legislative mandate. The Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program meets NOAA's Mission of "Science, service and stewardship."

Subject to the availability of funding, the quality of applications, and potential host office participation, the National Sea Grant College Program anticipates funding not less than 35 selected applicants, of which those assigned to the Legislative branch will be approximately 14. Each award will be funded at a total of \$90,500 in federal funding, which includes up to \$15,000 for office-related travel. In certain circumstances additional office-related travel funding may take the award above \$90,500. In such cases, any additional funds will be administered through an amendment to the grant.

### **Due Date**

Applicants must submit application materials to the Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program by **5:00 p.m.** local time on **February 16, 2023**.

### **Eligibility**

An eligible applicant is any student, regardless of citizenship, who, on February 16, 2023, is enrolled towards a degree in a graduate program, that has an interest in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources. The graduate degree must be awarded through an accredited institution of higher education in Puerto Rico. Applicants not enrolled in an institution in Puerto Rico must request a referral and include this referral as part of the application. To request the referral please contact:

Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager  
National Sea Grant College Program  
1315 East-West Highway, R/SG, Room 11861  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Tel: (301) 734-1088  
E-mail: [oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov](mailto:oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov)

This is a one-time fellowship opportunity. Applicants that have been selected and notified as a finalist in past years are not eligible to submit an application. The fellowship will take place in the National Capital region. Applicants must be able to reside in the Washington,

DC area. Non-US citizens are responsible for obtaining the appropriate visa to allow them to work in the United States during the fellowship period.

Foreign nationals please note: while this fellowship is open to all eligible students regardless of nationality, a significant number of participating Federal host offices are unable to accept foreign nationals as fellows. As such, there is a greater likelihood of not receiving a placement in a host office.

Prior contact/arrangements made with possible host offices before the start of the placement week will be cause for immediate disqualification from the process.

## **Project/Award Period**

Awards start on **February 1, 2024** and run for 12 months, and cannot be renewed or deferred. The final month of the award can be utilized by the fellow for relocation expenses, and is not intended for fellows to carry out host office activities or any other fellowship-salaried activities.

## **Content and Form of Application**

(1) **Two signed letters of recommendation on letterhead**, including one from the student's major professor; if no major professor exists, a faculty member with knowledge of the applicant's academic performance may be substituted.

Letters should focus on the student's academic and professional experiences, and extracurricular activities understood to be relevant to the Knauss fellowship. Letters of recommendation must be addressed to the University of Puerto Rico Sea Grant Program's Director and can be emailed to [seagrant@uprm.edu](mailto:seagrant@uprm.edu). Letters can also be sent via regular mail to:

Ruperto Chaparro, MA  
Director  
Sea Grant College Program  
University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez  
Call Box 9000  
Mayagüez, PR 00681-9000

(2) A **personal education and career goal statement**. The personal statement should be no longer than 1000 words, and should emphasize:

- Abilities, relevant experience and knowledge that the applicant will contribute to the host office.
- Applicant's expectations from the fellowship experience in terms of career development.

(3) **Curriculum vitae** (not to exceed two pages).

(4) Clear, scanned copy of all official **undergraduate and graduate student transcripts**.

(5) **Listing of classes and/or plans for spring 2023, summer 2023 and fall 2023** (not to exceed one page).

(6) To apply through the Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program, applicants must be enrolled in a United States accredited institution of higher education in Puerto Rico. Applicants who are not enrolled in an institution in Puerto Rico must request a **written statement from the Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship Program Manager** referring the applicant to the most appropriate eligible Sea Grant program.

## **Funding Restrictions**

The Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program receives and administers the overall cooperative agreement of up to \$90,500. Of this amount, \$68,000 is to be used to cover the fellow's salary/stipend for the first twelve months of the fellowship, and fringe/personnel expenses (health care, taxes, employee benefits); \$5,000 is to be used to cover relocation prior to and following the fellowship, academic tuition, journal publication fees, and academic- and fellowship-related travel, conferences fees, online trainings and workshops; \$2,500 is to be used to cover travel funding specifically marked for Placement Week-related expenses. Host offices may choose to provide additional funding for office-related travel and training up to an amount totaling \$15,000 which would bring the entire award up to \$90,500. Funding for office-related travel is not guaranteed and is entirely up to the host office with which the selected applicant is placed.

## **Application Review Process**

The Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program will review the applications received and select the applicants to be recommended to the National Sea Grant College Program review committee by **March 30, 2023**. The applicant should allow sufficient time to schedule an interview with the eligible Sea Grant program at the program's request prior to this date.

The Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program may select and forward to the National Sea Grant College Program no more than six (6) applications based on the evaluation criteria. In addition, the Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program may select and forward to the National Sea Grant College Program up to six (6) applications from applicants referred to Puerto Rico Sea Grant by the Knauss Fellowship Program Manager.

The National Sea Grant Office will notify the Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program the successful and unsuccessful applicants in June 2023. This email will contain a written summary of the review panel comments. The Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program will, in turn, formally notify each successful and unsuccessful applicant and forward the summary comments provided by the National Sea Grant Office.

## Evaluation criteria

At the state or territory level review, the evaluation criteria and weighting of the criteria are as follows:

**(1) Relevant experience related to diversity of education; extra curricular activities; and interpersonal, written and oral communications skills and other applicable competencies (75 percent).** For the Knauss Fellowship program, this includes the curriculum vitae, personal education and career development response, and Relevant Coursework and Future Year Plans which will be reviewed as follows:

- Curriculum Vitae (10 Points). The point scale is as follows: The CV is unclear and does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-3 points); the CV adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the CV exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).
  - The student has employment, volunteer, or extracurricular activities in academic, applied, research, administration, outreach, or policy positions;
  - The education and experience (personal and professional) in the student's area of expertise are appropriate to the career stage;
  - The student demonstrates academic, professional or personal experiences that are relevant and applicable to serving the American people;
  - The student's experiences show prior leadership roles relevant to their career stage (e.g., student government, faculty committees, advisory committees, professional societies, community initiatives, etc.).

**(2) Personal education and career development response.**

- Section One: Icebreaker (5 Points). The point scale is as follows: The icebreaker does not adequately address expectations outlined below (0-1 points); the icebreaker adequately addresses expectations outlined below (2-3 points); the icebreaker exceeds expectations outlined below (4-5 points).
  - The student demonstrates creative thinking and a willingness to think outside the box.
- Section Two: Career Path and Objectives (25 Points). The point scale is as follows: The career path and objectives does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-8 points); the career path and objectives adequately addresses expectations outlined below (9-18 points); the career path and objectives exceeds expectations outlined below (19-25 points).
  - The career path and objectives are specific, direct, and concise while discussing what the student would bring to and gain from the Knauss fellowship;
  - The student clearly articulates their career or professional goal;
  - The career path and objectives demonstrates the student's diverse personal and professional background;
  - The student demonstrates creative thinking, analytical skill, and/or indicates their capacity and willingness to make connections between science and broader economic, social, and political issues;
  - The student demonstrates their ability to convey scientific knowledge in broader,

- non-scientific contexts;
- The career path and objectives align with the broader mission of the Sea Grant program and NOAA. ● Section Three: Career Path Experience (25 Points). The point scale is as follows: The career path experience does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-8 points); the career path experiences adequately addresses expectations outlined below (9-18 points); the career path experiences exceeds expectations outlined below (19-25 points). ○ The student has shown interest in working with diverse collaborators, community members and/or interested partners; ○ The student demonstrates an interest in or commitment to the Sea Grant values of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Accessibility;
- The student's experience demonstrates a commitment to apply expertise to serve science and society;
- The student demonstrates creativity and willingness to navigate a challenging situation;
- The student demonstrates leadership and problem solving initiative.

**(3) Relevant Coursework and Future year plans (10 points).** The point scale is as follows: the relevant coursework and future year plans are unclear and do not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-3 points); the relevant coursework and future year plans adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the relevant coursework and future year plans exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).

- The student has activities in academic, applied, research, administration, outreach, or policy;
- The future education and experience (personal or professional) support the student's goals or provide further experiences applicable to the Knauss Program.

**4) Recommendations and/or endorsements of the student (15 points total).** For the Knauss Fellowship program the endorsements and content of the letter from the student's Sea Grant director, academic reference, and the second letter of recommendation are reviewed as follows.

- Letters of recommendation (5 Points designated for each letter of recommendation). The point scale is as follows: the letters of recommendation do not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0-1 points); the letters of recommendation adequately address expectations outlined below (2-3 points); the letters of recommendation exceed expectations outlined below (4-5 points).
  - The letter writers demonstrate knowledge of the student and their abilities;
  - The letter writers speak to the leadership potential, confidence, maturity, and self-direction of the student;
  - The letter writers provide evidence of the student's willingness and flexibility to tackle issues beyond their area of expertise and an openness and capacity to expand experiences;
  - The letter writers provide evidence of the student's ability to convey scientific knowledge in broader, non-scientific contexts.
- Director's Letter (5 Points). The point scale is as follows: the director's letter is unclear and does not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-1 points); the director's letter adequately addresses expectations outlined below (2-3 points); the

director's letter exceeds expectations outlined below (4-5 points).

- The director's letter demonstrates how the student fits with the Knauss Program, including any discussion of why the student belongs in the Knauss Program;
- Highlights the skills (academic, professional or personal) that the student would bring to the Knauss program;
- Elaborates on information not specifically addressed by the student in their application package.

**5) Overall application cohesion** (10 points total). For the Knauss Fellowship program consider all aspects of the application materials (CV, Personal education and career development responses, Relevant Coursework and Future Year Plans, Letters of Recommendation, Directors Letter). The point scale is as follows: the application is unclear and does not adequately address the expectation outlined below (0-3 points); the application adequately addresses expectations outlined below (4-6 points); the application exceeds expectations outlined below (7-10 points).

At the national review, evaluation criteria are identical to that at the eligible Sea Grant program level, except that in criteria (3), the letter of endorsement from the eligible Sea Grant program director will also be considered.

All applicants will be evaluated solely on their application package according to the criteria listed. Therefore, letters of endorsement from members of Congress, friends, or relatives will not be accepted.

### **To learn more about the Knauss Fellowship:**

<http://seagrant.noaa.gov/insideseagrant/Knauss-Fellowship>

### **Puerto Rico Sea Grant College Program contact information:**

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