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UVI Launches New Master's Program to Advance Careers in Marine and Environmental Science

UVI seeks applicants for its new Professional Science Master's in Marine and Environmental Science, offering hands-on STEM training and partnering with local organizations for internships and career development opportunities

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University of the Virgin Islands signage at the entrance of the Albert A. Sheen Campus on St. Croix. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

The University of the Virgin Islands has announced that it is actively seeking applicants and internship partners for its recently launched professional science master's (PSM) degree in Marine and Environmental Science. Approved by the UVI Board of Trustees in spring 2024, this program

is designed to equip students with the skills needed to enter the workforce in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers related to marine and environmental fields.

According to UVI, the two-year PSM program offers practical training, focusing on developing research expertise and effective science communication skills for diverse audiences, including researchers, stakeholders, and the general public. Individuals with interests or careers in areas such as natural resource management, environmental health, ecotourism, and science education are encouraged to apply to enhance their skills and professional experience. Applications will open on November 1, 2024. Prospective students can access the application link on UVI's Master of Marine & Environmental Science webpage.

Unique Career Opportunities and Real-World Training

The PSM degree is designed to complement UVI's existing Master of Science (MS) program in Marine and Environmental Science, which is research-focused and thesis-based, according to the release. While MS students conduct original research and formally present their findings, PSM students will complete the same foundational courses in the first year before pursuing elective coursework and a professional internship or work experience in the second year. This internship component is tailored to provide real-world experience, enabling students to build practical skills in marine and environmental sciences without the requirement of a thesis.

Dr. Kayla Blincow, an assistant professor at UVI's Center for Marine and Environmental Science (CMES) and a PSM graduate herself, emphasized the value of the program. "My PSM degree was an important stepping stone," she shared, explaining that her studies exposed her to various conservation fields, ultimately leading her to pursue academic research. Reflecting on UVI's PSM launch, Dr. Blincow added, "I am excited for UVI and the Center for Marine and Environmental Studies to bring the PSM experience to USVI students and make careers in marine science even more accessible to folks that want to explore the field beyond just academic research."

Internship Partners and Community Collaboration Sought

UVI is calling on organizations involved in marine and environmental sciences to partner as internship hosts for the PSM program. Potential partners are encouraged to provide part-time internship opportunities lasting four to eight months, where PSM students can apply their skills in real-world settings. Organizations interested in collaborating are encouraged to reach out to the program for more information on how they can support the professional development of future marine and environmental scientists.

For more information about the Professional Science Master's and Master of Science programs in Marine and Environmental Science, visit the UVI website's dedicated section or contact MMES Program Coordinator Sophia McKenzie at sophia.mckenzie@uvi.edu or MMES Acting Director Dr. Marianne Moore at marianne.moore@uvi.edu. Interested parties can also call the MS or PSM Program Offices at (340) 693-1688 for further assistance.