

REU Site: Understanding Coastal Ecosystems From the Everglades to the Coral Reefs

<https://environment.fiu.edu/get-involved/coastal-ecosystems-reu-site/>

Information for Mentors

Our 2023 REU Summer Program dates: May 22nd – July 28th, 2023

FIU's Coastal Ecosystems REU Summer Program is a 10-week immersive research experience connecting undergraduate students with Lead Faculty Scientists and Near-Peer Mentors (Post-Docs) in the pursuit of scientific inquiry and authentic research.

The program is comprehensively studying the ecology of coastal ecosystems. These efforts examine the changes across gradients of human impact among the Everglades, wetlands, coastal mangrove forests, seagrass beds and shallow water coral reef systems. Within this context we ask mentors to build capacity across the following program elements:

- **Research:** Extend research expertise to undergraduates working on individual or group projects with the guidance from both a Lead Faculty Scientists and a Near-Peer Mentor.
- **Education:** Lead Faculty Scientists and Near-Peer Mentors establish regular meetings and lab schedules to share successes and learn from challenges, leverage programmatic resources, and build a positive learning experience for the undergraduate students.
- **Community:** Build a sense of community among undergraduate participants all dedicated to advancing scientific research.
- **Professional Development:** Encourage and/or volunteer expertise to help undergraduates develop the skills and dispositions as professionals. Weekly workshops include scientific writing, the science of the Everglades, data management and statistical analysis, making and giving good presentations, GRFP applications, building CV's and resumes.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Program Leadership consists of Dr. Todd Crowl (tcrowl@fiu.edu) and Assistant Professor Beth Simmons (besimmon@fiu.edu) with program support from Bradley Schonhoff (bschonho@fiu.edu).

This NSF REU Site Program includes funding from [NSF REU Site](#) grant, the [Florida Everglades Foundation](#) and the [Florida Everglades Long Term Ecological Research FCE LTER](#) program. Mentors are encouraged to also include funding for students in grants, in requests for grant supplements, and/or seek institutional funding to help support the program.

The Understanding Coastal Ecosystem REU site is a year-round endeavor.

- **In the fall (October-November)** Lead Faculty Scientists from FIU's Institute of the Environment and collaborating institutions provide program leadership. Summer research project descriptions can be sent to besimmon@fiu.edu by November 20th and will be included on the Student Applications as well as [posted on the program website](#). Research projects involve a collaborative approach consisting of a Lead Faculty Scientist, a Near-Peer Mentor and an undergraduate student. Together these groups address an overarching research question or theme.
- **During the winter (December 5 – February 3)** Mentors will be provided a list of students who selected their research project(s). Mentors will review applications, conduct interviews, and make hiring decisions in collaboration with the REU Site program leadership.
- **Mid-March** Applicants will be notified of acceptances.
- **In the spring (April-May)** Mentors begin planning for summer research. We hold a spring planning meeting to facilitate the logistics of conducting summer research at FIU on both the MMC and BBC campuses. *Mentors and Near-Peer Mentors also participate in [summer program orientation](#) (Monday May 22, 2023) to get a better understanding of research, education, community and professional development activities that will be provided for the Undergraduates.*
- **During the summer** The focus is for students to work closely with both the Lead Scientist and the Near-Peer Mentor on their research project, and within the larger group, building the skills and independence in the research process. The program



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culminates in an annual summer poster session and campus symposium where students present their research to their peers, mentors, and the broader research community. Faculty Lead Scientists/Mentors and the Near-Peer Mentors are strongly encouraged to attend. **(Dates: Poster Session July 27th, Symposium Friday, July 28th).**

Questions about mentorship? Contact besimmon@fiu.edu