



News Release

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Top climate experts partner to help vulnerable communities throughout Hawai‘i and the Pacific

(Honolulu, HI) The University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai‘i Sea Grant) formed its newest center of excellence to assist coastal communities throughout Hawai‘i and the Pacific islands prepare for the impacts of both natural and human-induced coastal hazards.

Hawai‘i Sea Grant’s Center for Coastal and Climate Science and Resilience brings together world-renowned university scientists and outreach professionals with government and community partners to focus on critical issues relating to increasing coastal hazards impacts with changing climate and sea-level rise. This is particularly important in the Pacific since most of the development and infrastructure are concentrated on or near low-lying coasts, making island communities highly susceptible to these threats.

To mitigate natural and human-induced coastal hazards, as well as conserve and restore critical coastal environments for future generations, it is imperative that coastal management and policy are based on cutting-edge science. By creating an interdisciplinary center of excellence that brings together top university expertise in diverse fields such as oceanography, geology, engineering, law, and community planning, it ensures that the proposed solutions take into account all viewpoints, and incorporate the latest scientific findings.

One of the signature projects for the new center is “Building Resilience to Coastal Hazards and Climate Change in Hawai‘i,” an \$845,160, three-year project funded by NOAA’s Regional Coastal Resilience Grants Program. This project, led by Dr. Brad Romine, aims to increase Hawai‘i’s resilience to coastal hazards and also inform and build upon ongoing planning efforts including development of a Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Report by the State of Hawai‘i and Interagency Climate Adaptation Committee.

Dr. Mark Merrifield, director of Sea Grant’s Center for Coastal and Climate Science and Resilience and a professor in the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Department of Oceanography, noted “I have been working in Hawai‘i and throughout the Pacific islands for decades, and have seen firsthand how the changing climate is directly impacting the economy, the culture, and the health and wellbeing of people living in these extremely vulnerable island communities. By bringing together experts in many different fields and, together, identifying potential solutions to some of the most pressing issues the islands face, I am confident the new center will bring about lasting and meaningful change where it is needed the most.”

For more information about Sea Grant’s Center for Coastal and Climate Science and Resilience please visit <http://ccsr.seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu>

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The University of Hawai‘i Sea Grant College Program is part of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s prestigious School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology. It supports an innovative program of research, education and extension services directed to the improved understanding and stewardship of coastal and marine resources of the state, region and nation. Science serving Hawai‘i and the Pacific since 1968.