

BIOLOGICAL OCEANOGRAPHY GRADUATE PROGRAM

PRE-ADMISSION INFORMATION SESSION
November 15, 2023

UC San Diego



SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF
OCEANOGRAPHY

R/V Sally Ride, Anacortes, Washington. Credit: Jeff Dillon.

By the Numbers



350

Graduate students

800

Undergraduates enrolled
in Scripps majors

4,700

Undergraduate students
enrolled in Scripps courses

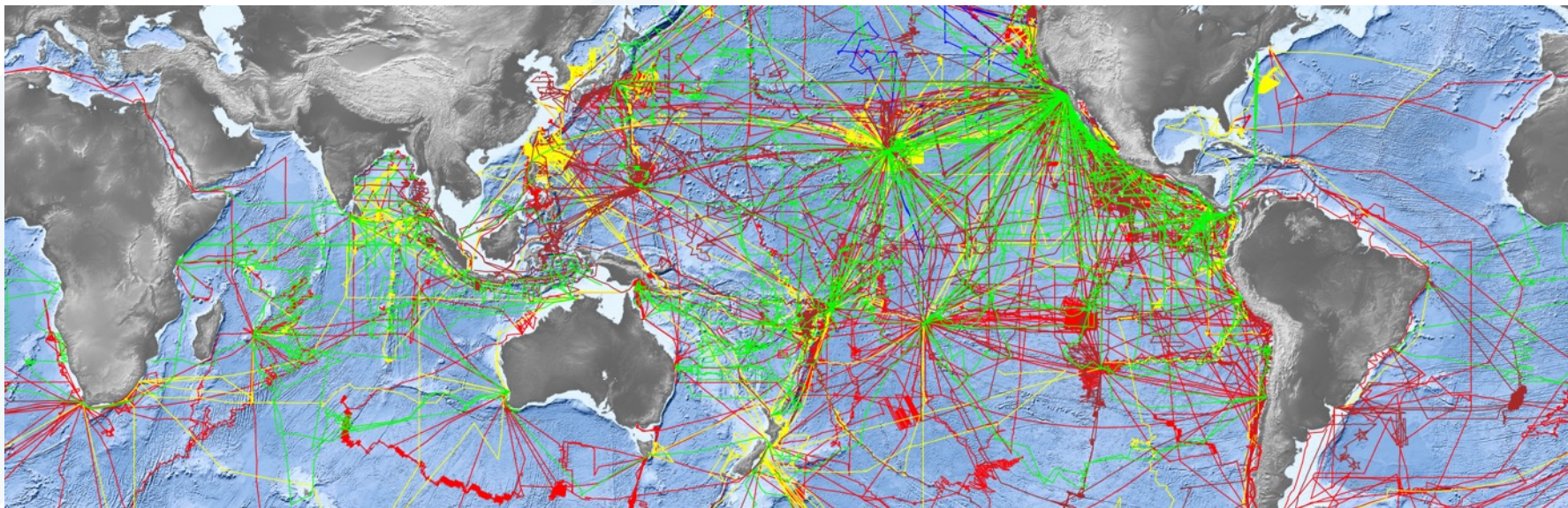


Education Organization: 1 Department, 3 Programs, 8 Curricular Groups

Department	Program	Curricular Group
Scripps Institution of Oceanography	Ocean Biosciences (OBP)	Marine Biology (MB)
		Biological Oceanography (BO)
	Geosciences of the Earth, Oceans, & Planets (GEO)	Marine Chemistry & Geochemistry (MCG)
		Geoscience (GS)
		Geophysics (GP)
	Climate-Ocean-Atmosphere (COAP)	Climate Science (CS)
		Physical Oceanography (PO)
		Applied Ocean Science (AOS)



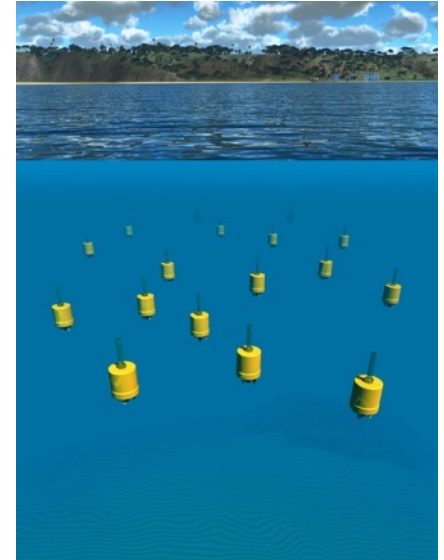
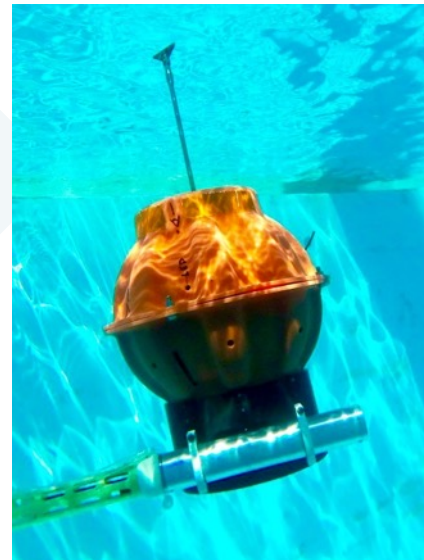
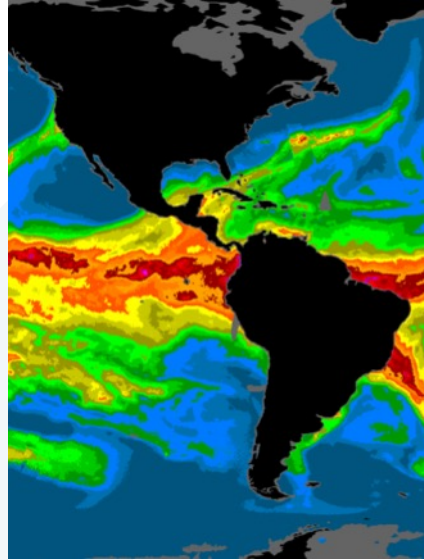
GLOBAL REACH



Scripps research vessel tracklines, 1952-2016.

Investigations and impact on every continent and in every ocean.

DIVERSE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODS FOR ANSWERING THEM



- Primary and secondary productivity and nutrient regeneration
- Community ecology of benthic and pelagic organisms
- Food web structure and trophic ecology

- Population dynamics, habitat changes and disruptions
- Microbial ecology and biogeochemical cycling
- Fishery biology and management
- Marine mammal ecology and communication

- Biogeography
- Deep sea biology
- Behavior
- Climate change impacts

APPLYING TO THE BO PROGRAM – APPLICATION



APPLICATION DEADLINE DEC 6

Requirements listed on website

- Letters of Rec
- Statement of Purpose
- Unofficial Academic Transcripts

Highly recommended !

- Additional experiences

Not required

- GRE

APPLYING TO THE BO PROGRAM – EVALUATION

CRITERIA
Academic Preparation relative to opportunity
Scholarly potential relative to opportunity
Potential relative to opportunities; "Distance Traveled"
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Contributions
Alignment with Program
Realistic Self-Appraisal
Preference for long-term goals

*weighting is subject to change

APPLYING TO THE BO PROGRAM – CRAFTING YOUR APP

Personal Statement & Additional Experiences



Credit: Erik Jepsen

SHOW, DON'T TELL !

Evaluation Criteria

- Potential relative to opportunities
- Academic Preparation
- Scholarly Potential
- Contributions to DEI
- Alignment with Program
- Realistic Self-Appraisal
- Long-term Goals

Other

- Leadership
- Research
- Community Involvement
- Personal/Professional Ethics
- Social Justice
- Overcoming Adversity

APPLYING TO THE BO PROGRAM – CRAFTING YOUR APP

Faculty have differing priorities



- Some prioritize scholarly potential
 - Research experience
 - Papers and presentations
- Others care about transcripts
 - Grades in STEM classes
 - Courses taken
- If you are weak in one area, emphasize the strong areas

APPLYING TO THE BO PROGRAM – CRAFTING YOUR APP

Faculty have differing priorities



Credit: Erik Jepsen

ALL WANT A GOOD STUDENT

- Give examples of how/why you would be a successful graduate student
 - Ambition
 - Creativity
 - Goal-oriented
 - Independence
 - Overcome obstacles
 - Persistence
 - Time management skills

ADMISSION TO THE BO PROGRAM – DIRECT ADMIT



- BO operates on a “Direct Admit” process
 - Exceptional applications are promoted for admission with competitive fellowships and TA support
- The Admissions Committee evaluates ALL applications with the rubric
- Faculty select students they want to admit
 - Guidance from the admissions committee
 - Faculty or the student required to have funding at time of admission
 - Once admitted, guaranteed 5 yr of funding, though source will vary (fellowship, GSR, TAship)
- Not a “Cluster Admission” process where a group of students are admitted en masse based on evaluation criteria

ADMISSION TO THE BO PROGRAM – DIRECT ADMIT

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS !

- Reach out to prospective faculty to introduce yourself ASAP
- Ask faculty if they are taking students next year
 - Lack of funding often prevents accepting students
- Mention your specific interests and experience
- Read the lab's papers and mention what draws you to that lab
- Ask if you can set up a one-on-one meeting via Zoom or in-person for local applicants



ADMISSION TO THE BO PROGRAM – DIRECT ADMIT

APPLY FOR FELLOWSHIPS !

Examples

- NSF GRFP
- California Sea Grant
- Davidson Fellowship
- Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship
- Ford Foundation Diversity Scholarship
- NASA FINESST
- National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate (NDSEG) Fellowship

Exhaustive list at:

<https://scripps.ucsd.edu/doctoral/cost-funding>



ADMISSION TO THE BO PROGRAM – TIMELINE



- Dec: Applications are reviewed by curricular group faculty
- Late Jan/Early Feb: Admission offers start to be sent
- Mid/Late Feb: SIO Open House
 - travel to SIO
 - PhD students only
- Some applicants will be put on “hold list”
 - Not accepted, not denied
- April 15, 2024: Student decision deadline

APPLYING TO THE BO PROGRAM – NEXT YEAR



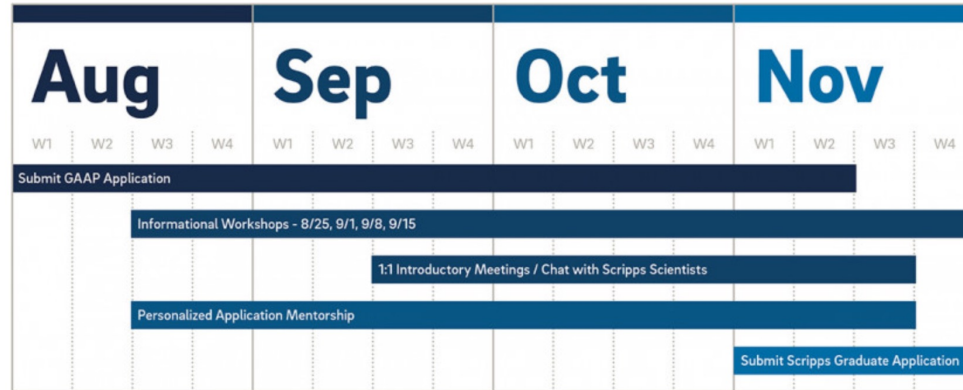
Ways to beef up your application

- Gain more research experience
- Take more STEM classes
- Apply for fellowships
- Ask to join the lab meetings of a prospective faculty advisor



APPLYING TO THE BO PROGRAM – NEXT YEAR

The Scripps Oceanography Graduate Application Assistance Program seeks to demystify the graduate application process and help support students who have been systematically marginalized and/or historically excluded from academia.



Ways to beef up your application

- Use the SIO Graduate Application Assistance Program
- All students are welcome to apply
- Student strongly encouraged:
 - Historically or currently underrepresented or underserved in ocean sciences
 - Attend minority-serving institutions (HBCUs, TCUs, and/or HSIs)

<https://scripps.ucsd.edu/diversity/access-success/graduate-application-assistance-programs>

QUESTIONS FROM THE ONLINE FORM - FACULTY

- How do I get into contact with professors?
 - Go to their pages on the SIO website and find their email
- How do I know which advisors are accepting PhD students?
 - Ask them
- Do I need to have support from a faculty advisor to be successful in my application? & Do I need to have an advisor agree to work with me before applying?
 - Theoretically, no
 - Most cases, yes
 - Need a faculty advocate
 - Helps to be in contact with faculty before applying
 - Helps to have a strong application and to apply for external funding

QUESTIONS FROM THE ONLINE FORM - COURSES

- For the required courses list, are all the courses required or is the sheet simply a space to list the courses taken during undergraduate years and the grades received?
 - No, they are not all required. Fill out what you have taken
- Is it possible to do undergraduate classes alongside the PhD program to meet the prerequisites? Is there a post-baccalaureate program?
 - No, there is no post-baccalaureate program through SIO
 - There is one through UCSD's Extended Studies; you will not be enrolled as an SIO grad student
 - It is possible to take undergraduate courses, but don't plan on it for meeting the requirements
- Do I need to have a marine science degree?
 - No, we want students with a scientific and quantitative background
 - We will train you to be biological oceanographers



THANK YOU
FOR ATTENDING

OTHER QUESTIONS?



UC San Diego



SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF
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Scripps researchers recover a BONGO net off the California coast.