

# BIOLOGICAL OCEANOGRAPHY GRADUATE PROGRAM

PRE-ADMISSION INFORMATION SESSION  
October 23, 2024

 UC San Diego



SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF  
OCEANOGRAPHY

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

## By the Numbers



**366**

Graduate students

**856**

Undergraduates enrolled  
in Scripps majors

**2,643**

Undergraduate students  
enrolled in Scripps courses



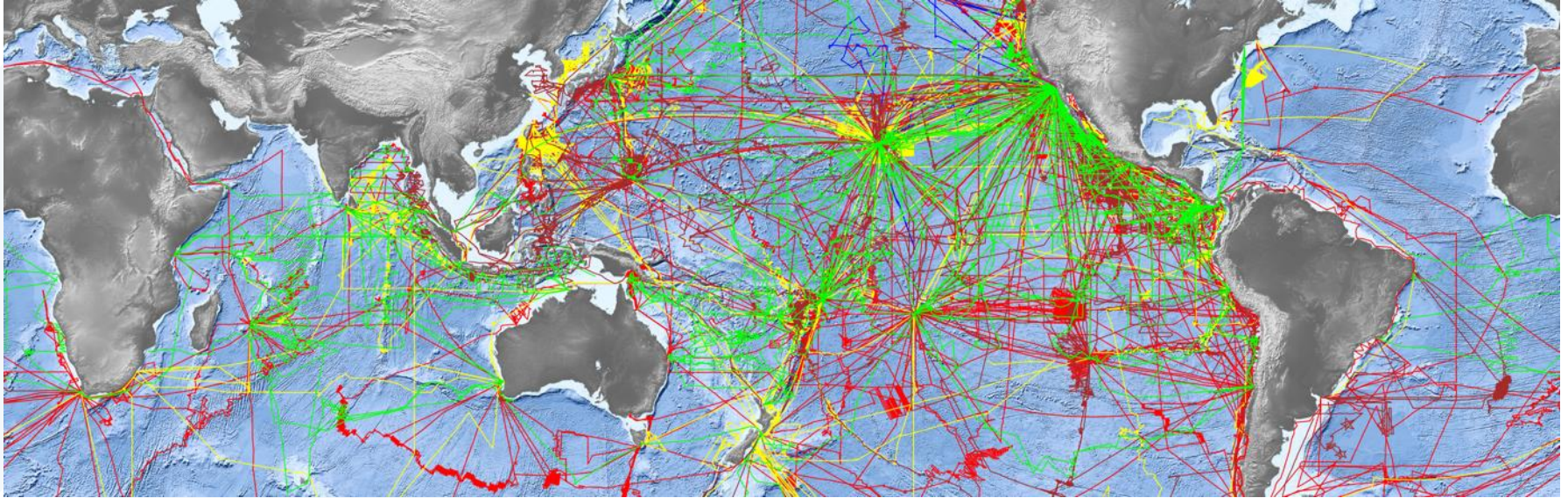
# Education Organization: 1 Department, 3 Programs, 8 Curricular Groups

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)





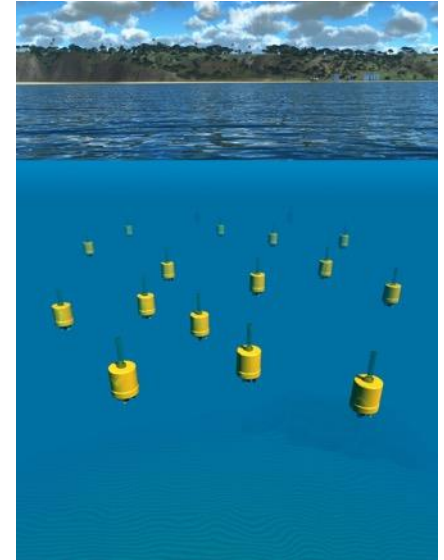
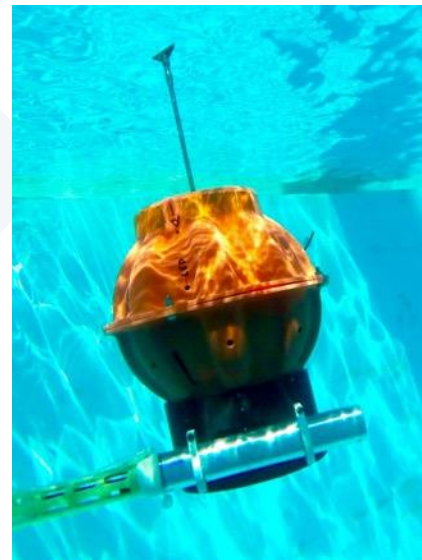
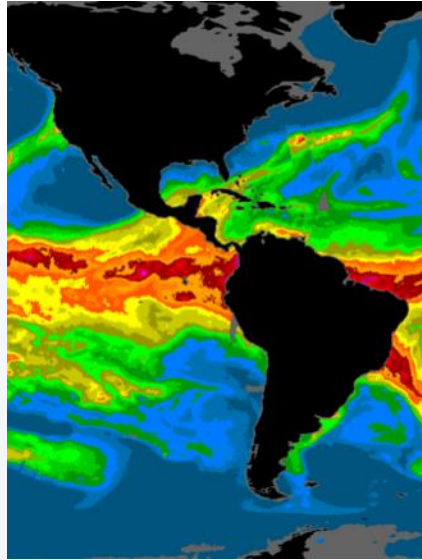
# GLOBAL REACH



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 4

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	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW
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



# APPLYING TO THE BO PROGRAM – CRAFTING YOUR APP

## Personal Statement & Additional Experiences



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### Evaluation Criteria

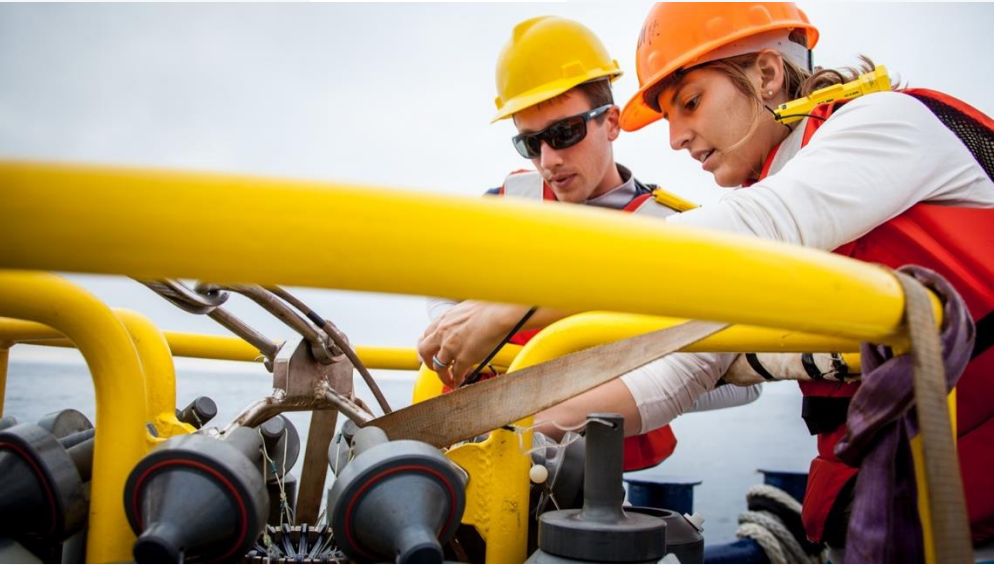
- Potential relative to opportunities
- Academic Preparation
- Scholarly Potential
- Contributions to DEI
- Alignment with Program
- Realistic Self-Appraisal
- Long-term Goals

### 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



*Credit: Maria Stenzel*

# 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



*Credit: Erik Jensen*

- Dec: Applications are reviewed by curricular group faculty
- Early/Mid Jan: Select candidates invited for Zoom interviews
- 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



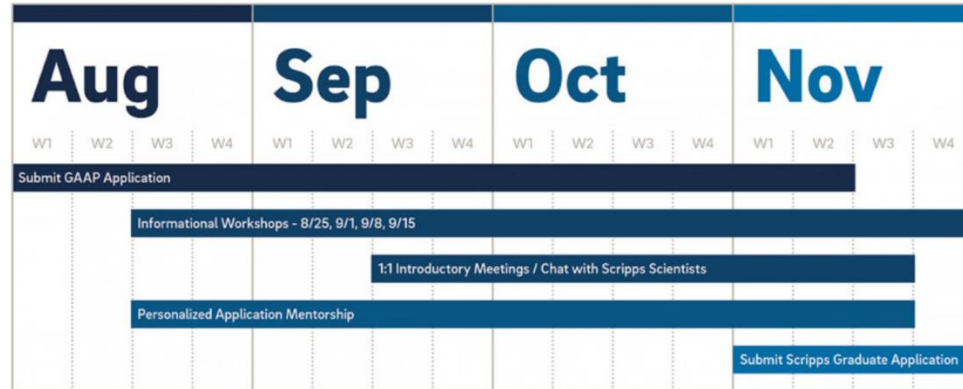
## Ways to beef up your application

- 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



A photograph of a research vessel deck. In the foreground, two large, white, funnel-shaped Bongo net frames are being handled by two researchers wearing red safety vests and hard hats. One researcher is pointing towards the net. In the background, another researcher in a red vest and hard hat is visible. The vessel is on the water, with a coastline visible in the distance under a cloudy sky.

**THANK YOU  
FOR ATTENDING**

**OTHER QUESTIONS?**



**UC San Diego**



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Scripps researchers recover a BONGO net off the California coast.