

Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellowship

Application Deadline: April 23, 2021

Fellowship Start Date: October 1, 2021

Virginia Sea Grant (VASG) and the Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE) are now soliciting applications for the 2021 Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellowship. This 12-month paid fellowship is intended to provide educational and professional development opportunities for post-graduates interested in Virginia's coastal and marine resources. Fellows receive on-the-job training by working with a host office to address pressing coastal and marine resource issues, while learning about the policy and management process occurring at the state level. Selected finalists for the fellowship will interview with prospective host offices to find the best fit for the fellow. VASG, VEE, and their partners anticipate supporting two to three post-graduate fellows starting on October 1, 2021. This announcement and guidance on how to submit your application can be found at: <https://vaseagrant.org/>

FELLOWSHIP DESCRIPTION

The Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellowship is sponsored by VASG and VEE, as well as the participating host offices. Modeled after the highly successful national Sea Grant Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship, the goal of the fellowship is to develop and support exceptional post-graduates by partnering them with a host office mentor where they receive on-the-job training and hone their professional skills, while improving the stewardship of the Commonwealth's coastal and marine resources. The program also aims to increase the capacity of the host offices by supporting fellows who are working on mission-relevant programs, and leveraging the knowledge and capacity of Virginia's academic institutions.

VASG is currently recruiting host offices among local and state government agencies, and non-government organizations (NGOs). As an example, previous offices that have participated in the matching process include Virginia's Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Marine Resources Commission, and Office of the Secretary of Natural Resources, and the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and The Nature Conservancy's Virginia Coast Reserve. Previous fellows worked on a range of issues including: the Commonwealth of Virginia's resilience initiatives, total maximum daily load and water pollution, shoreline erosion, policy improvements for water quality impairments, coastal community resilience, coordinating environmental document reviews and comments, implementation of electronic permitting, and blue crab fisheries management.

SPONSORS

Virginia Environmental Endowment aims to improve the quality of the environment by using its capital, expertise, and resources to encourage all sectors to work together to prevent pollution, conserve natural resources, and promote environmental literacy. Established in 1977, VEE has worked collaboratively as a leading independent grant-maker, improving environmental quality, advancing environmental literacy, and partnering to establish land trusts, conservation networks, and a statewide mediation center.

In Collaboration With



Virginia Sea Grant advances the resilience and sustainability of Virginia's coastal and marine ecosystems and the communities that depend upon them. As a broker of scientific information, VASG works with resource managers, businesses, communities, and other stakeholders to provide and apply the best science and information available. We do this through funding, and by conducting research, education, outreach, and communication services.

VASG is a federal-state partnership, funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with matching funds from our seven university partners. Hosted at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science at William & Mary (W&M), VASG's other partner institutions include: University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, and George Mason, James Madison, Old Dominion, and Virginia Commonwealth Universities.

FOSTERING A SAFE AND WELCOMING COMMUNITY

The funders are committed to building inclusive research, extension, communication, and education programs that serve people with diverse backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives, and ways of thinking. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability and/or health status, religion, veteran status, geographic origin and socio-economic status.

VASG and VEE do not tolerate any form of misconduct, discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault within its organization, at awardee organizations, field sites, meetings, or anywhere VASG-funded research, outreach and education are conducted). Virginia institutions of higher education and any other organization that receive VASG funds are responsible for having clearly stated policies outlining standard codes of conduct, academic program requirements, and prohibiting discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or sexual misconduct that comply with federal non-discrimination laws, regulations, and executive orders, and documented procedures for accepting reports of and investigating complaints of misconduct thoroughly, fairly and promptly. VASG implements policies, guidelines, procedures, and communications consistent with these principles to ensure that organizations funded by VASG clearly understand the program's expectations and requirements associated with its funding.

ELIGIBILITY

Graduate students close to completing their degree (Master's, Ph.D., or J.D.) in a coastal- or marine-related or relevant field (broadly defined, e.g., natural or social sciences, engineering and design, policy and legal analysis, planning, architecture, business, education, arts and the humanities, etc.) at a Virginia university or college are eligible to apply. Recent graduates who completed their graduate, professional degree or Ph.D. program at a Virginia university or college, graduating in the spring semester 2020 or after, are also eligible. Applicants should demonstrate a strong interest and some experience in coastal or marine resource policy and management (e.g., course work, internships, independent study, etc.). Fellows *must* complete all degree requirements prior to starting the fellowship.

AWARD INFORMATION

VASG and VEE anticipate supporting two to three post-graduate fellows for the 2021 Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellowship. The length of the fellowship assignment is 12 months and is nonrenewable. The start date for the fellowship is October 1, 2021. All Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellows who are placed in a host office are employees of W&M. Each fellow receives a salary of \$35,000 for the 12-month assignment, and \$5,000 for critical expenses (e.g., insurance, if needed) and professional development activities (e.g., travel, registration, or other expenses to participate in conferences, workshops, VASG-sponsored professional development training, etc.).

HOST-FELLOW RELATIONSHIP

The Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellowship is an innovative professional training experience and educational opportunity that will benefit both fellows and the host offices. As an integral foundation of the program, the fellows and host offices must be aware and sensitive to each other's mutual responsibilities, and the goals of the fellowship program. Fellows are expected to abide by standard code of conduct policies of their host office including, but not limited to, any: personnel policy, policy regarding sexual harassment, policy regarding workplace violence, policy regarding ethical behavior, and policy regarding the acceptable use of computer resources. Fellows will honor the working protocols of the host office and contribute to useful and relevant products that meet the host office's mission.

The host office is expected to provide opportunities for involvement in substantive projects that contribute to the fellow's professional development, education, and career goals, as well as provide adequate and appropriate mentorship for the fellow. Participating host offices have pledged to maintain a professional relationship with the fellows throughout the program and abide by all code of conduct procedures and policies including, but not limited to, the policies listed above. Additionally, all host offices have agreed to: 1) deliver an orientation that introduces their mission and goals, priorities, staff, and activities; 2) provide opportunities for substantive involvement in, and contribution to their program's activities, including a focused project and work tasks for the duration of the fellowship; 3) supply a professional mentor who will help support the fellow's professional growth through their individualized professional development plan, and regularly engage with him/her during the 12-month fellowship; and 4) provide a work space, supplies, travel expenses, etc. necessary to accomplish the fellow's tasks.

HOW TO APPLY

Intent to Apply

All applicants are required to contact Dr. Sam Lake, VASG's Fellowship and Research Program Coordinator (contact information below), to indicate their interest in the fellowship, discuss the application process, and to schedule their virtual interview.

Application Requirements

For all application elements outlined below, use Calibri or Times New Roman font. Font size can be no smaller than 11 point, and margins must be at least one inch on standard 8.5x11 inch paper. VASG recommends submitting all application elements as PDF documents. However, application elements I-III are required to be submitted as a single PDF document. VASG recommends including the name of the student in a header or footer on all pages.

- I. ***Personal and Career Goal Statement*** (1,000 words or less): The statement should include specific examples and details that illustrate to the reviewers who you are, the unique perspective that you bring to the fellowship and proposed host-office projects, and describe your professional goals and ambitions. Include how these goals relate to broader societal needs in the coastal and marine environment and/or communities. The statement should emphasize how past experiences and competencies contribute toward your short- (1-5yr) and long-term (>5yr) goals and in particular, how this fellowship would contribute toward those goals.

The statement should also speak to your leadership potential, communication ability, stakeholder engagement interests or experience, and include any pertinent information that provides insights into your past choices and future interests. Furthermore, it should highlight examples of personal resilience and tenacity when faced with a past challenge or barrier, and illustrate what motivates you today and moving forward with your interests in coastal and marine resource management, and the policy process occurring at the state level.

- II. **Resume or CV (two-page maximum):** Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate the diversity of their education and work experience, honors and awards, extra-curricular activities, volunteer history, and interpersonal, written, and oral communication skills.
- III. **Undergraduate and Graduate Transcripts:** Clear, scanned copies of all undergraduate and graduate student transcripts. Unofficial copies are acceptable, but the name of institution, degree program, courses taken, and GPAs must be clearly indicated. Transcripts should be included in reverse chronological order (i.e., newest transcripts first). All personal identification numbers (Social Security, student ID, etc.), personal email addresses, mailing addresses, etc. should be redacted prior to submission.
- IV. **Recommendation Letters:** Three letters of recommendation, including one from the student's primary faculty advisor or appropriate major professor, are required. If no major professor exists, a letter from the faculty member who is most familiar with the applicant's academic experience may be substituted.

The sponsors encourage applicants to consider someone who might know you from a different perspective (e.g., former employer, mentor from a previous relevant internship, someone you worked with on an outreach or policy project). It is most important to select someone who will write a strong letter for you, but an "outside" perspective helps to demonstrate your diversity and will likely highlight different strengths and experiences.

Referees are encouraged to include tangible and specific examples, and consider the applicant's:

- Academic and professional performance, including record and relevant experience;
- Personal motivation, perspective, and insight the applicant brings to their research and graduate program;
- Academic and professional potential for future success, including research and professional activities in integrated, trans-disciplinary settings;
- Responsibility, maturity, integrity, and personal accountability;
- Teamwork and leadership skills;
- Ability to identify and understand the *big picture*, and connections among perspectives; and
- Interest and competencies in the science-to-management or science-to-policy process, technical communication to non-experts, capabilities, and issues of relevance to the participating host offices.

To maintain confidentiality, VASG requires that letters are NOT submitted with the student's application. Recommendation letters must be requested and uploaded through eSeaGrant. There is no page limit for letters, but VASG recommends that letters not exceed two pages and not include attachments. Please address letters to Dr. Troy Hartley, Director, Virginia Sea Grant.

Application Submission

Applications must be submitted online via eSeaGrant (<http://vaseagrant.ecsion.com>) by **5:00 pm Eastern on Friday, April 23, 2021**. If you plan to apply, we strongly recommend notifying VASG and registering for eSeaGrant at least two weeks in advance of the deadline. Notifications can be sent as a short, simple email expressing your interest in the fellowship. Please reference "Commonwealth Fellowship" in the subject line.

Instructions on how to register and start an application on eSeaGrant are included below. Additional instructions can be found on the VASG website (<https://vaseagrant.org/>) and on eSeaGrant.



Applicants can register for eSeaGrant by visiting the website, selecting the “Register” tab, and completing the required information. If you do not receive a “welcome” email with login credentials shortly after registering, please contact Sam Lake.

To start a fellowship application, or edit an existing application, click on “Current Tasks” on the banner head, and select “Add Fellowship Application” under “2021 Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellowship.” Once you have added the fellowship application to your Current Tasks, you must progress down through the sequence of application sections (“Start Here” through “Submission Preview”) listed on the left side of the window to submit the application. Guidance related to these sections follows, in sequence. Please note: some sections may require additional pop-up pages. Please allow your browser to display pop-up windows and enable JavaScript.

Application elements I-III must be converted to a single PDF document before uploading to eSeaGrant. Adherence to the format requirements and page limits is mandatory, and ensures fairness across all applications. Applications not meeting these requirements may be rejected without review.

To preserve confidentiality, letters of recommendation must be uploaded directly from the referees to VASG through eSeaGrant. Applicants must identify and submit requests to their referees through eSeaGrant, by entering their names and email addresses on the corresponding section.

All elements, including recommendation letters, must be submitted by the deadline. VASG will not accept late applications under any circumstances (e.g., internet delays), so please allow ample time to submit your application in advance of the deadline. Confirmation of the application and recommendation letters will be automatically generated and sent by eSeaGrant. If you do not receive confirmation shortly after submitting your application, please contact Sam Lake.

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

VASG will first review all applications to ensure that they are complete and adhere to all application guidelines. Applicants will be invited to participate in a virtual interview with the fellowship selection committee, which could be composed of the funders, future potential host offices, and VASG stakeholder advisors. The committee will select finalists based upon the submitted application materials and virtual interviews. The selection criteria will be based on the applicant’s academic and professional performance and potential, professional and career goals, relevant and qualifying experience, communication and professional skills, and supporting recommendations and endorsements.

The placement of the selected finalists will be based on in-person interviews with the participating host offices, and ranking of preferences by both finalists and hosts. Consequently, placement to a specific host office cannot be guaranteed. The Virginia Sea Grant Director has final discretion to select projects based on the interview panel’s recommendations, ranking provided by the host offices and finalists, diversity and balance of the award portfolio, availability of funding, and programmatic objectives, needs and priorities.

TENTATIVE TIMELINE FOR FELLOWSHIP COMPETITION

Fellowship announcement released	November 2020
Applications due to VASG by 5:00 p.m. Eastern	April 23, 2021
Virtual interviews	June 2021
Notification of finalists	July 2021
Selected finalists interview with host offices	July-August 2021
Fellows notified of placements	Late August 2021
Placements announced	September 2021
Fellowship begins	October 1, 2021
Fellowship ends	September 30, 2022



FELLOWSHIP REQUIREMENTS

In addition to their work responsibilities to the host office, selected fellows will:

- **Collaborate with VASG's Communication Center:** Assist VASG efforts to publicize their research and fellowship activities. Fellows are required to submit blog posts and share story ideas.
- **Work with VASG's Professional Development Coordinator:** To develop and launch an individual professional development plan, based on your short- and long-term professional goals.
- **Collaborate with Your Mentor:** Work closely with your host office mentor, including identifying opportunities to execute your individual professional development plan.
- **Attend VASG Events:** Participate in regular meetings with VASG, including: An orientation meeting at the beginning of the fellowship; VASG-sponsored professional development activities; and an exit interview at the conclusion of the fellowship.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

This section includes information on the required policies and procedures that selected fellows must adhere to as a requirement of the fellowship award. These and other conditions of the award are stipulated in guidance documents, agreements, and the award announcements, which will be shared with the selected applicant prior to the start of the fellowship program. Please read through these policies carefully.

Federal Funding and Award Notifications

Funding for the fellowship program is contingent on available federal funds from NOAA and the National Sea Grant College Program. To ensure compliance with federal funding from NOAA, selected fellows should follow the policies outlined in the fellowship guidebook. In particular, fellows should be aware of and comply with the provisions of the Fly America Act and must comply with the Act when scheduling transportation for travel paid with VASG funds.

Health Insurance

Health insurance is mandatory for all fellows. As W&M employees, Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellows are eligible for insurance through the university. At the beginning of your fellowship, you will be required to provide a copy of your health insurance card or statement of coverage to prove that you are carrying the required insurance coverage.

Rights of Data

All work products originated or prepared by each fellow in the performance of his or her duties, including papers, reports, charts, and other documentations, but not including administrative communications with VASG (such as communications and material related to evaluations of the fellowship program), shall be delivered to and shall become the exclusive property of the host agency/program.

Acknowledge Support

Per the U.S. Department of Commerce's (DOC's) Standard Terms and Conditions, NOAA and VASG require funding recipients to credit financial assistance where appropriate. Acknowledging Sea Grant support is important to let the academic community and other key audiences know that the projects VASG funds are producing results.

VASG requests that you make these attributions by referring to DOC, NOAA, and VASG in publications and by reproducing VASG's logo, using the following guidance and resources available on our website (<https://vaseagrant.org/about-us/brand/>).



Papers in scientific, technical, or professional journals must include language mirroring the following within the acknowledgement section when supported by VASG (i.e., publications, reports, and products produced as a result of the activities outlined in the proposal; journal articles and reports authored or co-authored by the fellow while they are receiving VASG funds that support their stipend; etc. require the following acknowledgement). *Please replace the bracketed items with the appropriate award information.*

This [publication, report, website, video, etc.] was prepared by [recipient/author's name] using Federal funds under award [NOAA Award/Grant # _____], Virginia Sea Grant College Program Project [VASG Project # _____], from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Sea Grant College Program, U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Virginia Sea Grant, NOAA, or the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Annual Reports

Fellows are required to submit a progress report to VASG in early 2022 and a final written report at the conclusion of the fellowship year, outlining their accomplishments, professional development activities, and discretionary spending. All reports must be submitted through VASG's eSeaGrant reporting system.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

VASG has secured funding for the 2021 fellowship year; a determination of future fellowship announcements will be dependent upon review and assessment by the sponsors and host offices. It is the sponsors' hope that the Commonwealth Coastal & Marine Policy Fellowship becomes a mainstay of Virginia's coastal and marine resource management community, although future award notifications will be contingent upon the availability and timeliness of federal appropriations.

All applicants are required to contact Sam Lake to indicate their interest in the fellowship and to discuss the application process.

Samuel J. Lake, Ph.D.
Fellowship & Research Program Coordinator
Virginia Sea Grant
Ph. (804) 684-7436
Email: sjlake@vaseagrant.org