



An Opportunity to Soar for Conservation, Education, and More

A California State University Channel Islands and Santa Barbara Zoo Collaboration

California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI) and the Santa Barbara Zoo (Zoo) are poised to create a relationship like no other in this country, perhaps the world. By bringing together the experience and resources of both institutions, we will create a model for future conservation learning programs with the first-ever Conservation Center on the CSUCI campus.

Where it Began

A respected leader in local conservation efforts, the Zoo has well-established successful partnerships in the conservation field. With a commitment to local wildlife conservation, public education, and the protection of natural resources, the Zoo was looking for an off-site partner with a passion for education and capacity to house its ever-growing field conservation program.

CSUCI's cutting-edge approach to learning offers unparalleled student-centered academic experiences. With a focus on research and applied learning within and across disciplines, CSUCI was looking for new opportunities to create and expand programs that prepare a diverse student population for careers that match students' passions and skills with meaningful employment.

The Collaboration

On April 14, 2023, CSUCI and the Zoo formally committed to an exciting collaboration to create a model for meaningful, hands-on future conservation learning programs with the first-ever Conservation Center on the CSUCI campus. This creates an opportunity for working in collaboration: a symbiotic relationship that will propel Zoo and CSUCI programs into a new era.

"In the end we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught." ~Babe Dioum



Just Imagine!

- A Conservation Center that supports ongoing field conservation in the heart of one of our nation's biodiversity hot spots.
- A community nature center and outdoor gathering places that everyone can enjoy and that provide students and faculty with opportunities to share their passion for teaching and nature with local elementary/high school classes, families, and university guests.
- Sophisticated meeting space available to conservation partners, that in turn provides students with access to a vast pool of experts and professionals while bringing attention to the University.
- Opportunities to attract more students by providing a blend of theoretical and applied instruction that can be incorporated into the curriculum across new and expanded academic programs.
- Students participating in hands-on, minds-on experiences that feed directly into career opportunities.
- Classes using the Conservation Center as a laboratory and classroom, giving students access to applied conservation and an array of experts in real time.
- Opportunities to bring Zoo staff into university classrooms and laboratories as subject matter experts, advisors, and mentors.
- On-campus activities to restore populations of native species such as managing breeding facilities for endangered birds, amphibians, and fishes.
- Collaborative research opportunities using the Conservation Center to explore areas of reproductive biology, conservation education, human behavior toward and attitudes about the environment, and more.
- The potential to make a significant contribution to the protection of biodiversity on the Central and Southern Coast.



True Collaboration

CSUCI and the Zoo will work together to embrace every aspect of conservation from the classroom to fieldwork. With the strengths of these two innovative institutions, this collaboration has the potential to expand, benefiting students across a broad spectrum of academic programs.

CSUCI Performing Arts Program: Theatre Emphasis

Zoo guests have enjoyed live-action summer stage shows centered around conservation and animal welfare messages for years. CSUCI students in the Performing Arts program will have the opportunity to form a “theatre company” to create, produce, and perform shows at the Zoo during the summer and get paid! The Zoo will provide resources to support these efforts.

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Early Childhood Studies

The Zoo’s on-site Early Explorers preschool is a play-based, early education program that focuses on teaching through rich outdoor experiences. Early Explorers provides an opportunity for CSUCI’s Early Childhood Studies students to get hands-on experience while engaged in their undergraduate studies.

Contact to Learn More

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The Collaborators

California State University Channel Islands

Placing students at the center of the educational experience, California State University Channel Islands provides undergraduate and graduate education that facilitates learning within and across disciplines through integrative approaches, emphasizes experiential and service learning, and graduates students with multicultural and international perspectives.

Santa Barbara Zoo

Home to 414 animals representing 107 species of mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, fishes, and invertebrates (State of the Collection 2022), the Santa Barbara Zoo is dedicated to the preservation, conservation, and enhancement of the natural world and its living treasures through education, research, and recreation.