



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **CERF Selects Awardees of “Rising TIDES” Conference Mentoring Program for Underrepresented Minority Students**

The Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) is proud to announce the recipients of the 2017 Rising TIDES (Toward an Inclusive, Diverse, and Enriched Society) Conference Mentoring Program awards. Rising TIDES will jointly support underrepresented minority (URM) students and mentors to participate in [CERF 2017 - 24<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference](#) in Providence, Rhode Island, 5-9 November 2017.

CERF received 75 applications from students based at institutions around the world. From these applications, 11 student/mentor pairs were selected:

- **Anika Aarons**, Ph.D. student at Louisiana State University. Mentor: Lori Sutter, University of Georgia
- **Anita Arenas**, undergraduate senior, California State University Long Beach. Mentor: Christine Whitcraft, California State University Long Beach
- **Katie Blaha-Robinson**, master’s student, University of San Diego. Mentor: Kelly Darnell, University of Southern Mississippi
- **Jade Blennau**, undergraduate senior, Stony Brook University. Mentor: Anna Armitage, Texas A&M University at Galveston
- **Anjali Boyd**, undergraduate junior, Eckerd College. Mentor: Cynthia Sellinger, Oregon State University
- **James deMayo**, Ph.D., student, University of Connecticut. Mentor: Hans Dam, University of Connecticut
- **Amelie Jensen**, master’s student, University of the Virgin Islands. Mentor: Kristin Wilson Grimes, University of the Virgin Islands
- **Katherine Longmire**, master’s student, Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Mentor: Rochelle Seitz, Virginia Institute of Marine Science
- **Mario Marquez**, Ph.D. student, Florida A&M University. Mentor: Charles Jagoe, Florida A&M University
- **Ryan Parker**, master’s student, University of South Alabama. Mentor: Chris Madden, South Florida Water Management District
- **Johnny Quispe**, Ph.D. student, Rutgers University. Mentor: JeanMarie Hartman, Rutgers University

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Through joint support of both students and mentors, this program aims to enhance career development of URM students, ensure that students participating in the program will have sustained mentorship following the conference, help develop a community of practice for CERF members who are engaged in building diversity and inclusion within their own organizations and across institutions, and involve those who are already mentors of URM students in helping to transform CERF into a broadly inclusive society.

The 11 students were selected for their commitment to broadening participation in coastal and estuarine science and management, as well as for their strong academic promise and relevant professional and extracurricular engagement. CERF’s regional Affiliate Societies were also involved in the selection process to ensure broad geographical representation among the awardees. “We were extremely impressed with both the number and the high quality of the applications we received,” says Dr. Hilary Neckles, USGS Research Ecologist, CERF President-Elect, and chair of the Rising TIDES selection committee. “We are excited to engage these exceptional students and their mentors in broadening participation in coastal and estuarine science, and we look forward to growing CERF’s URM mentoring program in future years.”

The Rising TIDES Conference Mentoring Program is part of a comprehensive new initiative to enhance diversity and inclusion in CERF and coastal and estuarine sciences. The 2017 Program is supported by a National Science Foundation award, which provides full funding for students and partial funding for mentors to participate in the 2017 CERF Conference. In addition to the full suite of scientific sessions and other conference activities, students and their mentors will participate in a workshop with expert panelists and key CERF members and partners who are leaders in diversity, with the goal of inspiring and motivating URM students to pursue career pathways in coastal and estuarine science. Diversity, inclusion, and equity themes are infused throughout the regular conference programming for the benefit of all attendees.

Learn more about Rising TIDES: [www.erf.org/risingtides](http://www.erf.org/risingtides)

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### **About CERF**

The Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (CERF) is a private, non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to advancing the understanding and wise stewardship of estuarine and coastal ecosystems worldwide. Members of the Federation include researchers, managers, educators, students, and others from a wide variety of sectors, including academia, government, industry, and non-governmental organizations. The CERF Biennial Conference is recognized as the premier conference on the science and management of coastal and estuarine systems and resources. Learn more about CERF at [www.erf.org](http://www.erf.org).