



Rising Waters

A university partnership that provides agencies, governments and organizations with:

- Viable solutions on emerging complex issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries
- Facilitated cross-disciplinary discussion
- Enhance public awareness of complex issues
- High-quality interns and graduates with real-world experience on issues of importance

A New Era of Challenges

Over the next decade, water agencies, utilities, and service providers will face unprecedentedly complex challenges that require new ways of identifying and implementing sustainable water solutions.

University partnerships have a unique role to play in identifying new ways forward. They bring the greatest resources in academia — professors, students, laboratories, research libraries, curriculum — to tackle the biggest challenges faced by local communities. The outcome is meaningful change in engaged communities. This approach “moved us closer to our goals of a safe and livable community, a vibrant economy, and a healthy environment.” (Rick Scott, Former Director of Urban Development, Salem, Oregon).

On April 4, 2019, SSU President Sakaki signed the Presidents’ Climate Leadership Commitment, committing SSU to work with North Bay communities to catalyze meaningful and lasting change towards a sustainable future. As the only 4-year university serving the North Bay, SSU provides a trained workforce for businesses in the region with over 61 majors and 2,000 graduates each year.

Rising Waters is a new initiative emerging from a long-term collaboration between SSU and Sonoma Water. In the last 7 years, the WATERS Collaborative has engaged 3,164 students and 50 faculty in disciplines across campus to work with over 30 community partners on water-related projects (cei.sonoma.edu/waters) on topics ranging from pollution, flood, drought, conservation. **Rising Waters** takes the WATERS Collaborative further and deeper, establishing as its measure of success the meaningful improvement in water-related sustainability and resilience challenges of the North Bay.

Homelessness in Watersheds, a Rising Waters First-Year Project

During its first year, Rising Waters will address “homelessness in watersheds.” Recent increases in homelessness is testing the fabric of North Bay communities and the agencies, governments and organizations that serve them. Despite the existing policies and approaches, “the worst outbreak of Hepatitis A in recent memory in California occurred in 2016-2018 due to open defecation and lack of

handwashing facilities for persons experiencing homelessness" (Pacific Institute 2018). These are complex challenges that require multi-organizational and multi-disciplinary solutions based on the best information available. What is current extent of the problem? Who is affected within the watershed? Who is spending resources to address the crisis and are there better efficiencies and approaches? Rising Waters is an opportunity to use the power of inter-disciplinary study to develop viable solutions, and to enhance public awareness of the complexity of these issues.

The Rising Waters Leadership Team

Rising Waters is designed to help decision makers develop solutions for complex issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries and disciplines. Projects are collaboratively identified and addressed by a Leadership Team composed of water agencies, organizations, and universities who work together to explore new solutions that might never be imagined through traditional structures. Members of the leadership team attend a series of four workshops between July 2020 and May 2021:

1. Leadership Planning Workshop (2 hrs) - **July 16, 2020 3-5 pm** Leaders from environment, water, health and social service sectors identify approach for pan-sector engagement at August workshop.
2. Issues and Studies Workshop (4 hrs) - Aug 2020. Pan-sector participants identify possible solutions and multi-disciplinary faculty-student teams begin research.
3. Solutions Workshop (3 hrs) - Dec 2020. Faculty/student teams present initial study results and brainstorm with leadership team to hone solutions.
4. Results Workshop (2 hrs) - May 2021. Final presentations to leadership team and others



Claudia Luke, PhD
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Dr. Claudia Luke is responsible for ensuring that Rising Waters outcomes meet the needs of all partners. She has over 25 years of experience supporting academic-community partnerships and helping multi-interest groups work together to take transformational action. Dr. Luke holds a PhD in Zoology from UC Berkeley and received the 2018 North Bay Leadership Council award in environmental stewardship.

