The Communication Focus trains students to think strategically and communicate effectively about the environment through a blend of theory and practice. They learn to create compelling narratives, reach appropriate audiences, and assess message impact. Students also acquire indispensable verbal and written communication skills and learn media tools, such as video production and social media.

“You may have a wonderful environmental solution, but if you can’t communicate it effectively, it won’t be used.”
– Dr. Steve Gaines, Bren School Dean

If scientific research is not communicated effectively, it can remain unseen and unheard by those who could benefit from it most.
Communication focus coursework prepares students to create targeted and impactful media. Students begin with Strategic Environmental Communication in their first year and end with a client-based Capstone course in their second year. To build skills, they also select two or more electives, such as persuasion, social media, video production, data visualization, writing, presentations, or grassroots organizing. The focus may be added to any master’s specialization and is open to all PhD students.

**A COMPETITIVE EDGE**

“Employers constantly tell us what they value most is the ability to communicate well.”

- DAVE PARKER, DIRECTOR OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

“*I teach environmental media production because I’m a firm believer in the power of film for positive change.*”

- MICHAEL HANRAHAN, COMMUNICATION FOCUS

**CAPSTONE PROJECT**
The Communication Capstone is dedicated to providing win-win situation for students to get professional, hands-on learning experiences, while clients receive outreach materials to help advance their outreach goals. Students work in teams to develop strategy and creative content for their client over ten weeks.

**CAPSTONE OBJECTIVES**
Students will gain:
- Experience scoping a strategic communication campaign
- Opportunities to build their professional portfolio
- Experience developing media in a professional context
- Networking opportunities with environmental organizations

**PAST CLIENTS & PROJECTS**
- **BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT**
  short video on citizen science and the rocky intertidal zone
- **SANTA BARBARA CHANNELKEEPER**
  infographics on capturing rainwater to alleviate the California drought
- **SALTY GIRL SEAFOOD**
  audience research on millennials and their interest in sustainable seafood
- **MARINE SCIENCE INSTITUTE (UCSB)**
  branding strategy and competitive landscape analysis
- **EXPLORE ECOLOGY**
  web content and a parent/teacher outreach strategy to promote engagement with school gardens
- **MARINE BIODIVERSITY OBSERVATION NETWORK**
  an interactive digital map of the distribution of local marine species

---

**MEET THE EXPERTS BEHIND THE COMMUNICATION FOCUS:**

**RICHARD HUTTON** is Executive Director of the Center for Environmental Communication and Education, and has served as Executive Director of UCSB’s Carsey-Wolf Center. Previously, Richard ran Vulcan Productions, where he co-produced numerous documentaries and mini-series for organizations such as PBS. Richard has worked as Senior Vice President of Creative Development at Walt Disney Imagineering, has authored or co-authored many books, and has been published widely, including in the New York Times Magazine.

**LISA LEOMBRUNI, PhD** is Manager of the Communication program, and brings her experience in broadcast science media, communication research, and environmental policy to the Bren School. Previously, Lisa worked for NOVA/WGBH Boston, where she co-developed proposals for new television programs, oversaw media evaluation and impact studies, and conducted editorial research. She has consulted for a variety of clients, including the United Nations, Oxfam America, the Center for American Progress, and Climate Nexus.

**MICHAEL HANRAHAN** is Video Producer at the Earth Media Lab and brings more than two decades of experience in environmental media storytelling to UCSB. In collaboration with UCSB’s Carsey-Wolf Center, Michael co-founded Blue Horizons, a popular summer environmental filmmaking program. He was president of the Ocean Channel and has spent 20 years in natural history film and media production for such clients as Discovery Channel, The Nature Conservancy, and NOAA.

**CELIA ALARIO** is a grassroots media strategist and founder of PR for People and the Planet. She creates social action campaigns, political documentaries, and books, and has placed hundreds of stories about critical social justice issues in prominent national and international media outlets. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Independent Television Service (ITVS).