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UCSB Students Present Solutions to Local Environmental Issues

Three films produced by participants in UC Santa Barbara's Green Screen environmental media program will have a public screening this month at the Santa Barbara Public Library. In addition, a set of public communication campaigns designed by students to promote environmental awareness and action by two Santa Barbara public agencies will also be presented.

The event, titled "Media and the Environment: Communicating about Santa Barbara's Ocean, Air and Land," begins at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18, in the library's Faulkner Gallery. It is free and open to the public.

The films, which highlight issues facing coastal and marine habitats along the UCSB shoreline, were written, directed, and produced by students in the departments of film and media studies, art, and marine science as well as the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management at UCSB. The filmmakers were supported by grants from the Associated Students Coastal Fund, a student initiative that provides financial assistance to community projects aimed at enhancing, protecting, and restoring the coastline.

The Green Screen program is part of the Environmental Media Initiative (EMI) at UCSB's Carsey-Wolf Center for Film, Television, and New Media. Aimed at improving the understanding and management of the many relationships between the environment and the media, EMI brings together experts from a broad range of

academic disciplines, business, government, and nonprofit organizations to examine how the environment and media channels are conceptualized, portrayed, and communicated by one another.

The films to be screened include "Chimes of Gaviota, or I've Got the Real Estate Blues," a documentary that mocks land development along the Gaviota coast; "The Goleta Beach Project," a documentary that examines the erosion of Goleta Beach and the policy process associated with it; and "Inn Deep," an environmental comedy about global warming that combines live action with animation.

The public communication campaigns to be presented grew out of a graduate course taught at UCSB by Ronald Rice, The Arthur N. Rupe professor of the social effects of mass communication and co-director of the Carsey-Wolf Center. Using both traditional and new media, the students worked with the Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District and the Santa Barbara Environmental Services Division to produce the campaigns addressing a particular set of environmental issues.

Campaigns produced in conjunction with the Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District explore how messages on YouTube and Facebook can bring attention to issues of air pollution and climate change and how audiences can be reached through these new media; using the Zaca fire as an example, how agencies can communicate information about air quality and safety; and how younger adults can be encouraged to take the greatest advantage of alternative transportation.

For the Santa Barbara Environmental Services Division, student campaigns focus on increasing recycling efforts of small businesses and in school cafeterias.

"The students are using theories and concepts from the course to identify the issues, conduct research, and draw conclusions for campaigns," said Rice. "The campaigns could include research design and evaluation, posters, short videos, or a variety of other components." He added that most of the students and agency coordinators involved in the campaigns are so excited about the results they plan to continue working on the projects next quarter.

"Media and the Environment" is presented by the Carsey-Wolf Center; the Environmental Research Focus Group of UCSB's Interdisciplinary Humanities Center; the Department of Communication; the Department of Film and Media Studies; the Coastal Fund; the Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District; and the Santa Barbara Environmental Services Division.

About UC Santa Barbara

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