



Sea 
Grant

2027 Sea Grant Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship Student Guide

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1. How to Use this Guide

This guide is designed to support applicants. All applicants must follow the requirements listed in the Federal Funding Notice. If you have specific questions, reach out to oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov.

This guide is an additional resource to the Federal Funding Notice (NOAA-OAR-SG-2027-32433) for students interested in the 2027 Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship program. Some sections of this guide outline the required elements for a student to successfully submit a Knauss application, while others focus on tips and best practices. The document breaks down each section of the application process, provides answers to frequently asked questions, outlines what is expected in each section, and explains how each section will be reviewed, including a few tips. Students should review these materials and reach out to the state Sea Grant program through which they are applying to learn more about the process.

Each section contains the following elements, as appropriate:

- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):** Questions and answers that the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) receives from prospective students.
- **Notes:** Information and specific details about the section of the application.
- **Tips:** Recommendations for strengthening each section of the application.
- **Questions/Instructions:** The specific questions the student should address in the section of the application materials.
- **Score Scale:** The scoring breakdown for that specific section.
- **Criteria:** The details of how the reviewers will evaluate the section.

2. The Knauss Fellowship

Sea Grant is a federal-university partnership program that brings science together with communities for solutions that work. With the mission to enhance the practical use and conservation of coastal, marine and Great Lakes resources to create sustainable economies and environments. As part of this mission, the Sea Grant program has four strategic focus areas: environmental literacy and workforce development, healthy coastal ecosystems, sustainable fisheries and aquaculture and resilient communities and economies.

The Sea Grant Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship provides a unique educational experience to students enrolled in graduate programs in fields related to ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources. The program matches graduate students with hosts in legislative or executive branch offices in the Washington, DC area, for a one-year (12-month) paid

Fellowship. The Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship is an extension of a student's education—a chance to grow and learn in an area they may not have been exposed to in the past.

FAQs About The Knauss Fellowship

QUESTION: How do I pronounce Knauss?

ANSWER: It is pronounced “ka-now-s,” which rhymes with ‘mouse.’ The initial K is vocalized, not silent.

QUESTION: Is the Knauss Fellowship a non-partisan fellowship? What does it mean to be non-partisan?

ANSWER: Yes, the Knauss Fellowship is non-partisan. Non-partisan means to be free from party affiliation, bias, or designation. Fellows serve with distinction in offices in the legislative and executive branches, regardless of party or administration.

3. Eligibility

Any student is eligible to submit to this opportunity if:

- The student is a U.S. Citizen (born or naturalized), a U.S. Lawful Permanent Resident (Green Card holder), or a U.S. dual national;
- The student is enrolled towards a degree in a graduate program at any point between the onset of the 2025 Fall Term (quarter, trimester, semester, etc.) and June 3, 2026;
- The graduate degree will be awarded through an accredited institution of higher education in the United States or U.S. Territories, and;
- The student has an interest in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources.

Other Considerations

- The one-year fellowship will take place in the National Capital region. Applicants must be prepared to relocate to the Washington, D.C. area.
- Dual nationals are eligible for both the executive and legislative cohorts. Dual nationals, please note that a significant number of participating federal host offices are unable to accept you as fellows. This may reduce the number of placement opportunities available to dual citizens.
- Applicants must be able to pass a federal background security check. Most positions require a public trust clearance; some require a secret clearance. You will be asked detailed questions about your personal history. An example of a

security background form is available [here](#). Please note that federal laws supersede state laws.

- Any prior contact/arrangements made with potential host offices before the start of the placement week will result in immediate disqualification from the process.
- Applicants who have been accepted as national finalists and/or become fellows are not eligible to apply again without the written permission of the NSGO Fellowships Manager. Permission may only be granted in response to exceptional life events. A national finalist is an applicant who completes the review process and is selected at the national level for the fellowship program. Applicants are considered finalists until they are paired with a host office during the placement process.

The National Sea Grant College Program champions working to create a marine science workforce that reflects the communities we serve. We are recruiting, retaining, and preparing a dynamic workforce, and proactively engaging and serving the populations of coastal communities. Sea Grant is committed to building research, extension, communication, and education programs that serve people with unique backgrounds, circumstances, needs, perspectives, and ways of thinking.

FAQs About Eligibility

QUESTION: I am a foreign national. Am I eligible for the Knauss Program?

ANSWER: No. Unfortunately, due to security clearance regulations, foreign nationals are not eligible for the Knauss Program.

QUESTION: I would like to defer my selection as a Knauss fellow for a year. Is that possible?

ANSWER: Applicants selected as national finalists may not defer their placements. As a Knauss fellow, you are expected to begin your fellowship at a start date determined by the National Sea Grant Office between February and June 1 of the year of your fellowship.

QUESTION: I have access to reasonable accommodations through my university. Will I still have access to these accommodations?

ANSWER: Reasonable accommodation access requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. Each situation is unique, depending on a fellow's needs or university status. Please reach out to the National Sea Grant Office to discuss reasonable accommodations access.

4. Fellowship Timeline

*Dates are subject to change.

Month	Activity
March	Opportunity goes live
June	Student applications due to the state programs by June 3, 2026, 5:00 p.m. local time
	State Sea Grant programs review packages, check for minimum requirements, properly redact and interview applicants
July	Letters of intent due to NSGO from the state program by July 8, 2026, 5:00 p.m. ET
	State Sea Grant programs nominate up to 6 applications each to the national competition by July 22, 2026, 11:59 p.m. ET
August	NSGO reviews packages, checks for minimum requirements, reviews redaction
	NSGO reviews Knauss applications
	Review panel webinar
	Paper reviews completed
	Present selection recommendations
	NOAA Federal Assistance Law Division (FALD) notification
September	Grants actions/program notification
	Sea Grant programs notified ~ September 9, 2026
	Finalists notified ~ September 14, 2026
	Finalists welcome workshop ~ September 24, 2026
October	Finalist information/commitment due
	Finalists assigned to the legislative or executive placement process
February-April	Legislative and executive placement weeks
March-May	Fellow onboarding (security, etc.)
June	Fellowships start June 1, 2027
	Fellowship orientation June 1-5, 2027
July	Professional development plans due
October	Fellow and host/NSGO check-ins
December	Midyear Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) due to state Sea Grant
April	Successful completion of fellowship (to date) verified
	Direct Hire Authority (DHA) eligibility (earliest date if applicable)

May	Graduation
	Fellowship ends May 31, 2028

5. Award Information

The Knauss Fellowship award is administered by a cooperative agreement between the National Sea Grant College Program and the state Sea Grant program/university. All funds will be administered through the Sea Grant program to which the applicant applies and are subject to the respective university's rules and regulations. All student applicants should be made aware of the anticipated salary, benefits, and other provisions the programs will provide.

Fellow Budget Breakdown			
Base Funds	Fellow Salary	\$74,700	Fellow salary/stipend and may cover employee expenses/fringe (taxes, healthcare, social security, etc.)
	Fellow Professional Development	\$5,000	Discretionary budget (moving, professional development, within-year travel, etc.)

Specific budget breakdowns may vary by state Sea Grant program. We encourage all applicants to discuss the award details with their state Sea Grant program at the time of application. These funds are not guaranteed and may vary depending on host office placement.

6. Where To Apply

Students should apply through the [Sea Grant program](#) at the university in which they are currently enrolled. If the student is enrolled at a university not represented by a Sea Grant program, they should contact the National Sea Grant Office (oar.sg.fellows@noaa.gov) to be assigned to a program.

FAQs on Where to Apply

QUESTION: I am a resident of a different state from the state where my school is located. Should I apply to the program in the state where I am a resident?

ANSWER: No, the student should apply through the state in which their university is located.

QUESTION: My research focuses on a different state/region from where my university is based. Should I apply to the state where my research is focused?

ANSWER: No, the student should apply through the state Sea Grant Program in which their university is located.

QUESTION: What if my state has more than one Sea Grant program? Which program should I apply to?

ANSWER: Either program. We encourage you to reach out to the one you are already familiar with to apply. If you are not familiar with either program, reach out to them both and decide which is a better fit for you.

7. Application Materials and Review Criteria

For consideration for the 2027 Knauss Fellowship, a complete application package must include the following elements:

Project Narrative (To be submitted by Program)	
Director Letter	
Additional Attachment (To be submitted by the student via the program)	
Curriculum vitae	
Personal Education and Career Development Response	Section One: Career Path and Objectives
	Section Two: Career Path Experience
Relevant Coursework and Future Year Plans	
Letters of Recommendation	
(if applicable) Out of State Letter	

a) Submitted by the Sea Grant Program on Behalf of the Student Applicant

Director Letter	
Recommended Length	Two pages, maximum
Description	<p>The director letter will be based on the totality of the student's application package and an interview with the student. The director will discuss the following topics in the letter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate why the student aligns with the goals of the Knauss program (Section 1B); • highlight the skills the student emphasized in the student application materials and interview; • highlight the student’s response to program interview questions regarding interpersonal skills and ability to manage expectations in challenging situations; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain any gaps in the CV or personal education and career development response, or anything that the student was unable to include in the Student Application Materials (see Section IV. B. 3. d. Other Attachments) that they feel is important for the review panel to know.
Points	10 Points
Point Scale	The director letter will be reviewed based on the following criteria. The letter of reference does not adequately address the expectations outlined (0); the letter of reference addresses the criterion in a poor or confusing way (1); the letter of reference meets the criterion in an average or expected way (5); the letter of reference meets the criterion in an exceptional way (10).
Review Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The director's letter demonstrates how the student aligns with the Knauss Program, including what the student would bring to and gain from the Knauss Fellowship; highlights the skills (academic, professional or personal) that the student would bring to the Knauss program; highlights the ability of the student to manage interpersonal situations and respond to adversity; and elaborates on information not specifically addressed in the student's application package.
Pro Tip	Be true to yourself in your interactions with the director and Sea Grant staff. Ensure that you answer questions honestly and fully in your interview.

b) Submitted by the Student

Curriculum Vitae	
Recommended Length	Two-page maximum
Notes	The student should not include personal contact information or links to external resources (e.g., LinkedIn, articles, blogs).
Points	10 Points
Point Scale	The CV does not adequately address the expectations outlined (0); the CV addresses the criterion in a poor or confusing way (1); the CV meets the criterion in an average or expected way (5); the CV meets the criterion in an exceptional way (10)
Review Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student has employment, volunteer, or extracurricular activities in academic and applied, research, administrative, outreach, or policy positions;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the education and experience (personal and professional) in the student’s area of expertise are appropriate to the career stage; the student demonstrates academic, professional or personal experiences that are relevant and applicable to serving the American people; and the student's experiences include prior leadership roles relevant to their career stage (e.g., student government, faculty committees, advisory committees, professional societies, community initiatives, etc.).
Pro Tip	Use good, consistent formatting (bold, italics, indentations) to help provide a clear and concise CV. Your materials should be non-partisan, including the language you use to present yourself. Highlight activities that are free from party affiliation, bias, or designation

Personal Education and Career Development Response	
Recommended Length	The entirety of the Personal Education and Career Development Responses should not exceed 1,500 words. Each section and subsequent subsection should be answered separately using the section headers below. Section headers will not count toward the overall word count (see Appendix A).
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student should emphasize their abilities and expectations of the fellowship experience in terms of their career development; each section and subsequent subsection should be answered separately using the section headers below. Section headers will not count toward the overall word count; and the student should not include personal contact information or links to external resources (e.g., LinkedIn, articles, blogs). If included, programs should redact prior to submission.
Pro Tip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read each section carefully and make sure to address the full question being asked. Think beyond academics. Your life experiences (educational, professional and personal) make you the individual you are. Do not repeat your CV; expand on it. Make sure to present yourself in a non-partisan fashion, as this is a non-partisan fellowship.
Total Points	60 Points

Section One: Career Path and Objectives			
Label	1A	1B	1C

Recommended Length	The recommended word count for each prompt is 250 words. Each prompt should be answered separately using the section headers. Section headers will not count toward the overall word count.		
Prompt	The student should discuss any experience(s) (researcher or otherwise) that support or relate to the mission of the National Sea Grant College Program or the state Sea Grant program (the student does not have to have had a direct connection to Sea Grant). The student should emphasize (if relevant) any experience with extending and distilling science for non-scientific audiences.	The student should discuss their interest in the Knauss Fellowship, focusing on how it supports their career path. The student should focus on how the Knauss Program would further their professional development.	The student should discuss the transferable skills (those applicable across a variety of disciplines) they would bring to the Knauss Fellowship. In this response, students should highlight experiences from their personal, professional and academic background.
Review Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The student clearly links experiences to the mission of Sea Grant (national or state); ● the student demonstrates their ability to convey scientific knowledge in broader, non-scientific contexts; and ● the student demonstrates creative thinking and analytical skills, and/or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The student demonstrates an understanding of the Knauss Fellowship program; ● the career path and objectives demonstrate the student’s broad personal and professional background; ● the student clearly articulates their career or professional goals; and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The skill set demonstrated will provide a foundation for success in the Knauss Fellowship; and ● the student is specific, direct, and concise while discussing the skills they have cultivated throughout their career.

	indicates their capacity and willingness to make connections between science and broader economic, social, and political issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student is specific, direct, and concise while discussing what they would bring to and gain from the Knauss Fellowship. 	
Points	10 Points	10 Points	10 Points
Point Scale	The answer does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0); the answer addresses the criterion in a poor or confusing way (1); the answer meets the criterion in an average or expected way (5); the answer meets the criterion in an exceptional way (10).		
Pro Tip	Review the mission of the National Sea Grant College Program and the state program through which you are applying.	Be specific about why you are interested in the Knauss Fellowship. If you are unsure, explore how the fellowship will help define or guide your career.	Tell us what you would bring to the fellowship.

Section Two: Career Path Experience			
Label	2A	2B	2C
Recommended Length	The recommended word count for each prompt is 250 words. Each prompt should be answered separately using the section headers. Section headers will not count toward the overall word count.		
Prompt	During the fellowship, finalists will serve in a range of capacities, including developing and delivering public programs or services, informing policy-making, and providing evidence-based advice to leaders. The student	The student should discuss a situation in which they have managed or supported a project or activity involving collaborators, community members, and/or interested partners to achieve a common goal. The	The student should discuss a situation in which they overcame a challenge (e.g., within a community or institution, personally, professionally, etc.), specifically how they took a leadership role. The student should also consider including

	should discuss how they have and/or will embrace the concept of public service.	student is encouraged to use examples.	a reflection on what they learned from this experience.
Review Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student demonstrates an interest in contributing to public programs or service; and • the student demonstrates experiences in public service, including, but not limited to, volunteering, leadership, extension or education experiences. These do not have to be directly related to NOAA's mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student demonstrates creativity and willingness to navigate a challenging situation; • the student demonstrates leadership and problem-solving initiative; and • the student has shown interest in working with collaborators, community members and/or interested partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The student demonstrates creativity and willingness to navigate a challenging situation; and • the student demonstrates leadership and problem-solving initiative.
Points	10 Points	10 Points	10 Points
Point Scale	The answer does not adequately address the expectations outlined below (0); the answer addresses the criterion in a poor or confusing way (1); the answer meets the criterion in an average or expected way (5); the answer meets the criterion in an exceptional way (10).		
Pro Tip	Think about what the significance of public service means to you, and the activities you have participated in that support that.	Make sure to tell a story (no need for specific details like names or institutions).	Make sure to tell a story (no need for specific details like names or institutions).

Relevant Coursework and Future Year Plans	
Recommended Length	One page, single-spaced, maximum

Section Description	The student should discuss any relevant coursework and their activities for the upcoming year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relevant Coursework: The student may discuss any completed or in-progress classes that they deem relevant to their success in the Knauss Fellowship Program. ● Future-year activities: The student should include a list of classes and/or plans for spring, summer, and fall 2026.
Points	10 Points
Point Scale	The relevant coursework and future year plans does not adequately address the expectations outlined (0); the relevant coursework and future year plans addresses the criterion in a poor or confusing way (1); the relevant coursework and future year plans meets the criterion in an average or expected way (5); the relevant coursework and future year plans meets the criterion in an exceptional way (10).
Review Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The student has activities in academic, applied, research, administration, outreach, or policy; and ● Future education and experience (personal or professional) support the student’s goals or provide additional experiences relevant to the Knauss Program.
Pro Tip	Provide an explanation for why a class you have taken or an activity in your future, applies to or supports the Knauss program.

Letters of Recommendation	
Recommended Length	Two pages, single-spaced, maximum per letter
Section Description	Two letters of recommendation from individuals who have worked with the student, including at least one from a faculty member associated with the student’s current enrollment who has knowledge of the student’s academic and research (when applicable) performance. Each letter should not exceed two pages, single-spaced, and should clearly indicate the letter writer’s name and position. These letters should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● discuss the following attributes of the student: self-motivation, response to setbacks, skills and involvement in teamwork, collaborative leadership skills, willingness to learn a new skill or topic, academic performance and potential; and ● speak to anything else the review panel should know about the strengths that the student will bring to the fellowship
Points	5 Points each; 10 points total
Point Scale	The letter does not adequately address the expectations outlined (0); the letter addresses the criterion in a poor or confusing way (1); the

	letter meets the criterion in an average or expected way (3); the letter meets the criterion in an exceptional way (5).
Review Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The letter writers demonstrate knowledge of the student and their abilities; • The letter writers speak to the leadership potential, confidence, maturity, and self-direction of the student; • The letter writers provide evidence of the student’s willingness and flexibility to tackle issues beyond their area of expertise and an openness and capacity to expand experiences; and • The letter writers provide evidence of the student’s ability to convey scientific knowledge in broader, non-scientific contexts
Pro Tip	Schedule an appointment or meeting with your letter writers well in advance. Discuss the program to which you are applying, the selection criteria, and highlight your most relevant professional experiences. Make this process as easy for the writers as possible.

c) Final Review Criteria: Overall Application Cohesion

Overall Application Cohesion	
Section Description	For the Knauss Fellowship program, consider all aspects of the application materials (CV, personal education and career development responses, relevant coursework and future year plans, letters of recommendation, director letter).
Points	10 Points
Point Scale	The application does not adequately address the expectations outlined (0); the application addresses the criterion in a poor or confusing way (1); the application meets the criterion in an average or expected way (5); the application meets the criterion in an exceptional way (10).
Review Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application materials complement each other; • the application materials provide a clear picture of what the student would gain from receiving the Knauss Fellowship; and • the application materials provide a clear picture of what the student would bring to the Knauss Fellowship.
Pro Tip	Ensure that your application materials complement each other. Do not just repeat the same information in every section!

8. Finalist Selection Process

All student applications will go through three rounds of review. The first two rounds will determine whether the student application is selected as a finalist; the third round of review will occur post-selection and be used to determine the finalist's cohort.

State Sea Grant Program Review

The first round of review will occur at the state program level with the goal of identifying up to six applications from that state/individual program to be submitted to the national competition. Each program might conduct the process slightly differently, but fundamentally, all applications will undergo an administrative review to determine compliance with the requirements and completeness of the student application. Each student application must then receive at least three separate written reviews based on the evaluation criteria.

National Review

The second round of review will occur at the national program level with the goal of selecting the finalists for the Knauss Class. At the national level, all applications will undergo an initial administrative review to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application.

For applications that meet the minimum requirements, each will be ranked individually by reviewers based on the evaluation criteria. Finalists will be selected in rank order, unless there is a justifiable reason to select out of rank order based on the listed criteria, with particular interest given to the balance of finalists based on geography, student applicant scores as submitted at the state level and program priorities and policy factors (note a complete list of selection factors can be viewed in the NOFO).

Cohort Split

After the final selection and announcement of Knauss finalists, the NSGO will place student applicants into either the legislative or executive cohort. Selection of executive and legislative cohorts will be informed by selected finalists' stated preference (solicited after the announcement of the selected student applications), response to a questionnaire and writing samples, interviews, recommendations from the eligible Sea Grant program director and independent reviewers, as well as the selection factors.

The NSGO will provide a series of webinars on the expectations and experiences of the legislative and executive cohorts. For a preview of these webinars, applicants may review Appendix B. Following the webinars, the finalists will be asked to respond to a series of questions to better understand their goals for the Knauss year and to provide information about their adaptability and work style. Additionally, finalists will be asked to provide non-partisan professional writing samples (Appendix C).

The NSGO will leverage the expertise of individuals experienced in the legislative and executive branches to place fellows in appropriate cohorts. Prior to the finalization of the cohorts, finalists will be asked to confirm their interest and participation in the program.

Following the cohort split, those finalists placed with the legislative branch will be asked to provide a Hill-relevant Curriculum Vitae. The NSGO will provide a workshop and support to help the finalists rework their CVs.

9. Programmatic Considerations

Participation in the Knauss Fellowship is a privilege, not a right. The year will ultimately be what a fellow makes of it and what they choose to learn from it. Fellows should expect growing pains—new offices, new people, new places. How a fellow approaches, grows and learns from these challenges is up to the fellow and can make or break a fellowship experience. While we hope and anticipate that everyone feels fulfilled and leaves the fellowship with a positive experience, learning that policy, the federal government process, a desk job, or a leadership style is not the right fit is also beneficial. The Knauss program is an extension of a fellow's education. Fellows should approach the year with an open mind and a chance to learn about themselves and the breadth of the federal government.

Applicants should consider the following information before applying:

- Access to materials from previous Knauss applications can be useful; however, students should refrain from copying them directly. The NSGO recommends that students have coaching sessions or conversations with former fellows rather than relying solely on shared materials.
- Some host offices will review a finalist's social media and other internet activities.
- The Knauss Fellowship is an extension of a student's education. The program expects participants to engage in professional development and complete all mandatory reporting requirements.
- Knauss fellows are representatives of both their placement office and the Sea Grant program. Fellows may be expected to draft or implement policies (within the law) in line with their offices' expectations. At times, personal opinion will be superseded by office priorities.
- The Direct Hire Authority (DHA) is a benefit of the program. Receiving the DHA is contingent upon the successful completion of the fellowship, which includes, but is not limited to, completing 10 full months of the program, maintaining good standing with the host office, and participating in programmatic professional development activities.
- Knauss fellows are not federal employees; however, they are subject to host office and university policies regarding telework, working hours, and travel. This may mean that fellows are subject to federal travel restrictions.

Appendix A: Example Template for Personal Educational Career Goals Statement

Note: Do not use the header/footer formatting tool (including adding page numbers), as the grant system does not allow them.

Personal Educational Career Goals Statement

Section One: Career Path and Objectives

1A) Applicant response (250 words or less)

1B) Applicant response (250 words or less)

1C) Applicant response (250 words or less)

Section Two: Career Path Experience

2A) Applicant response (250 words or less)

2B) Applicant response (250 words or less)

2C) Applicant response (250 words or less)

Appendix B: Executive vs Legislative Cohorts

The Sea Grant Knauss Fellowship has two tracks for fellows: the Legislative and Executive cohorts. Following selection, student applicants (finalists) will have the opportunity to learn from the fellowships team and program alumni about the differences between the cohorts. Finalists will have the opportunity to express their interest in either cohort. Additionally, all finalists will be asked to complete a questionnaire to assess fit for the cohort and provide professional writing samples.

Legislative Cohort

Congress, established by Article 1 of the Constitution, is the legislative branch and law-making body of the US federal government. Congress is composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives. In addition to writing laws, Congress is responsible for oversight of the executive branch through hearings and investigations.

The Legislative Cohort places fellows in Congressional members' offices and committees, where they work with staffers on national and state priority topics, including the environment, coasts, and beyond.

Typical Day as a Legislative Fellow

- In most cases, a host office is looking for a fellow who can translate and understand science broadly, not just on a very specific topic. Often, Knauss fellows serve as scientific experts and researchers for their office.
- Subject matter is dictated by the office, what legislation is moving on the floor, and new hot issues, and may change without much warning.
- Fellows are expected to prepare briefings and talking points for upcoming hearings or meetings.
- Fellows may draft (or redraft) legislation. This includes starting from the beginning or picking up where another staff member has left off, depending on the voting cycle.
- Fellows may be expected to find cosponsors for bills of interest.
- Fellows will be expected to attend meetings with constituents, respond to constituents, and represent the priorities and positions of their host office.

Student applicants are encouraged to consider the legislative cohort if any of the following fit their goals:

- Enjoy fast-paced work and the opportunity to address a wide range of tasks each day.

- Able to work for and communicate respectfully with people and organizations that hold differing viewpoints.
- Able to work in open-space, often busy environments, and able to balance personal working needs with frequent engagements.
- Enjoy quickly digesting and distilling information to provide a concise perspective or recommendation on actions or next steps, along with an ability to back up decisions with evidence. Long stretches of time to do deep dives on research are extremely rare.
- Open to working across topical areas related to the environment, ocean, energy and community issues.

Executive Cohort

The executive branch of the U.S. government, headed by the President and Vice President, is responsible for implementing, enforcing, and administering federal laws. The executive branch includes 15 executive departments and over 50 independent agencies, which are responsible for implementing the laws enacted by Congress.

Sea Grant fellows have been placed across the executive branch from the White House Office of Science Technology and Policy to the State Department and U.S. Coast Guard, as well as across NOAA Line Offices. There are typically two types of positions in the executive branch: those that are highly focused on a particular topic, where fellows can become subject-matter experts, and those at higher levels of the agency, which provide a broad view of how executive branch offices implement laws and execute budgets and projects.

Typical Day as an Executive Fellow

- Fellows work as part of a team, and may support a specific issue area, a broad office portfolio or both.
- Fellows may research issues, gather information and prepare summaries or briefing materials for leadership.
- Fellows may respond to requests and help coordinate time-sensitive projects or priorities.
- Fellows may draft reports, memos, correspondence or responses to congressional and interagency requests.
- Fellows may support, and in some cases, lead project management, strategic planning and implementation of efforts.
- Fellows may develop expertise in a focused topic area or contribute across a wide range of subjects related to the host office.

Student applicants are encouraged to consider the executive cohort if any of the following fit their goals:

- Excited to gain experience working within the executive branch and contribute to an agency's mission.
- Are interested in learning how federal policies, priorities and decisions are implemented in practice.
- Gain exposure to the intersection of science, policy, management and public service.
- Are eager to deepen expertise in a familiar topic or to expand their knowledge by working in a new subject area or function.

Appendix C: Writing Samples

As part of the cohort split process, Knauss finalists will be asked to provide Nonpartisan Professional Writing Samples. These will be reviewed by executive and legislative subject-matter experts and may be provided to potential hosts. Additional guidance and support will be provided to finalists, as appropriate.