



The **Pasulka Lab** at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo is recruiting a master's student for Fall 2027 to join a funded research program focused on improving our ability to monitor phytoplankton and harmful algal blooms (HABs) along the central California coast. This research combines imaging flow cytometry, automated coastal observing technologies, phytoplankton ecology, and quantitative data analysis to develop higher-resolution observations of coastal plankton communities. The student will work with imaging flow cytometers to collect, process, classify, and analyze images of phytoplankton and contribute to ongoing HAB monitoring and automated observing efforts in San Luis Obispo Bay and Morro Bay. The student will develop an individual master's research project within this broader research program.

An ideal student would have many of the following qualifications:

1. Experience with phytoplankton identification and/or HAB monitoring is strongly preferred
2. Experience in (or willingness to learn) the operation of imaging flow cytometers
3. Willingness to learn instrument-specific software and image-processing workflows
4. Ability to process and classify large phytoplankton image datasets
5. Quantitative data analysis and visualization skills using R
6. Ability to develop reproducible workflows for biological and environmental datasets
7. Experience in fieldwork and willingness to participate in fieldwork at the Cal Poly Pier and in Morro Bay
8. Communication skills to share research findings through presentations, reports, and scientific publications
9. Ability to work independently and as part of a collaborative research team
10. Minimum 3.0 undergraduate GPA

Prior to applying to Cal Poly's master's program:

Interested candidates should email Dr. Alexis Pasulka (apasulka@calpoly.edu) with the following:

- 1) A brief description of qualifications, interest in the Cal Poly MS program, and the project. Please include experience with data analysis, fieldwork/logistics, phytoplankton, and other relevant skills,
- 2) a short CV (2 pages max), and
- 3) the names and contact info of at least 3 references

Your application materials should be emailed as a single PDF file (with the title 'LastName_FirstName.pdf').

Funding

Funding for this master's research opportunity includes tuition and a stipend.

Application Deadline for Cal Poly MS Program is January 4, 2027

More information about the Cal Poly Biology Graduate Program and instructions for applying are available here: <http://bio.calpoly.edu/content/grad-degrees>.