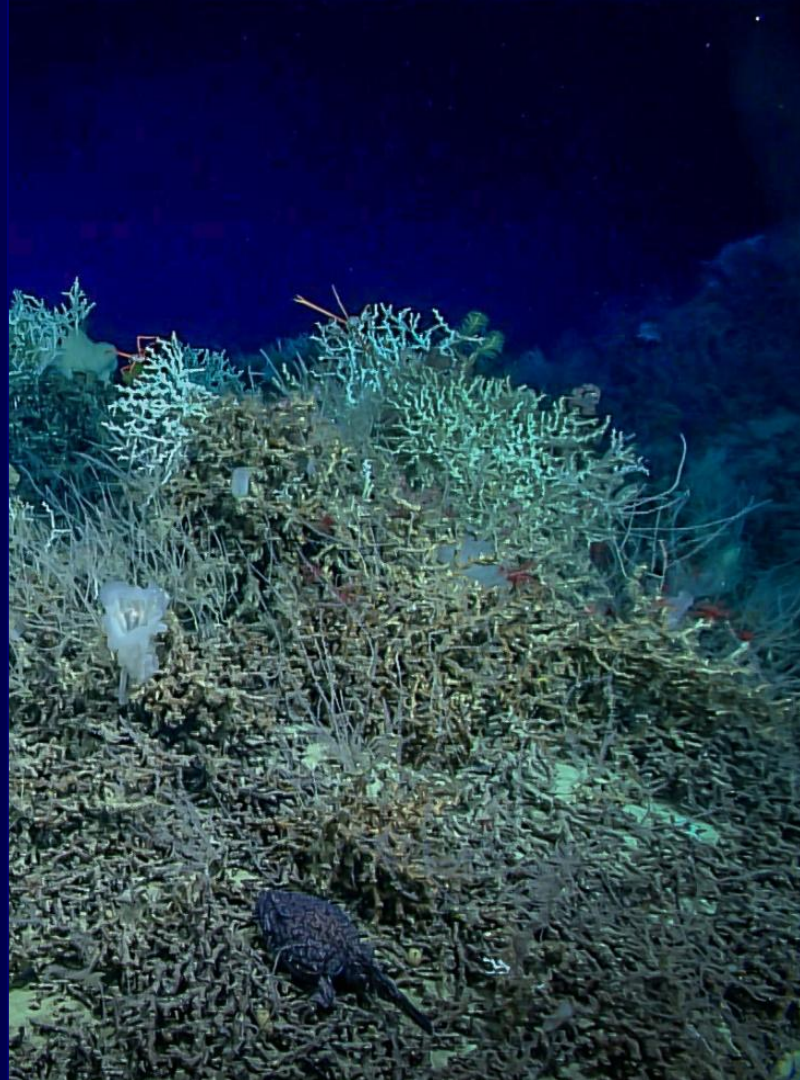




**OCEAN
EXPLORATION**

FY 2025 OER Program Review

*OER Internships:
Advancing Student & Early
Career Development*



Our Mission

- Train the next generation of ocean explorers, scientists, engineers, & communicators
- Provide **experiential learning opportunities** for students and early-career professionals
- Increase **diversity, equity, and accessibility** in the ocean exploration workforce



OER Student Opportunities



STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

NOAA Internship & Fellowship Programs:

[Explorer-in-Training \(EiT\) Program](#)

[Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program](#)

[EPP/MSI* Undergraduate Scholarship Program](#)

[William M. Lapenta Internship Program](#)

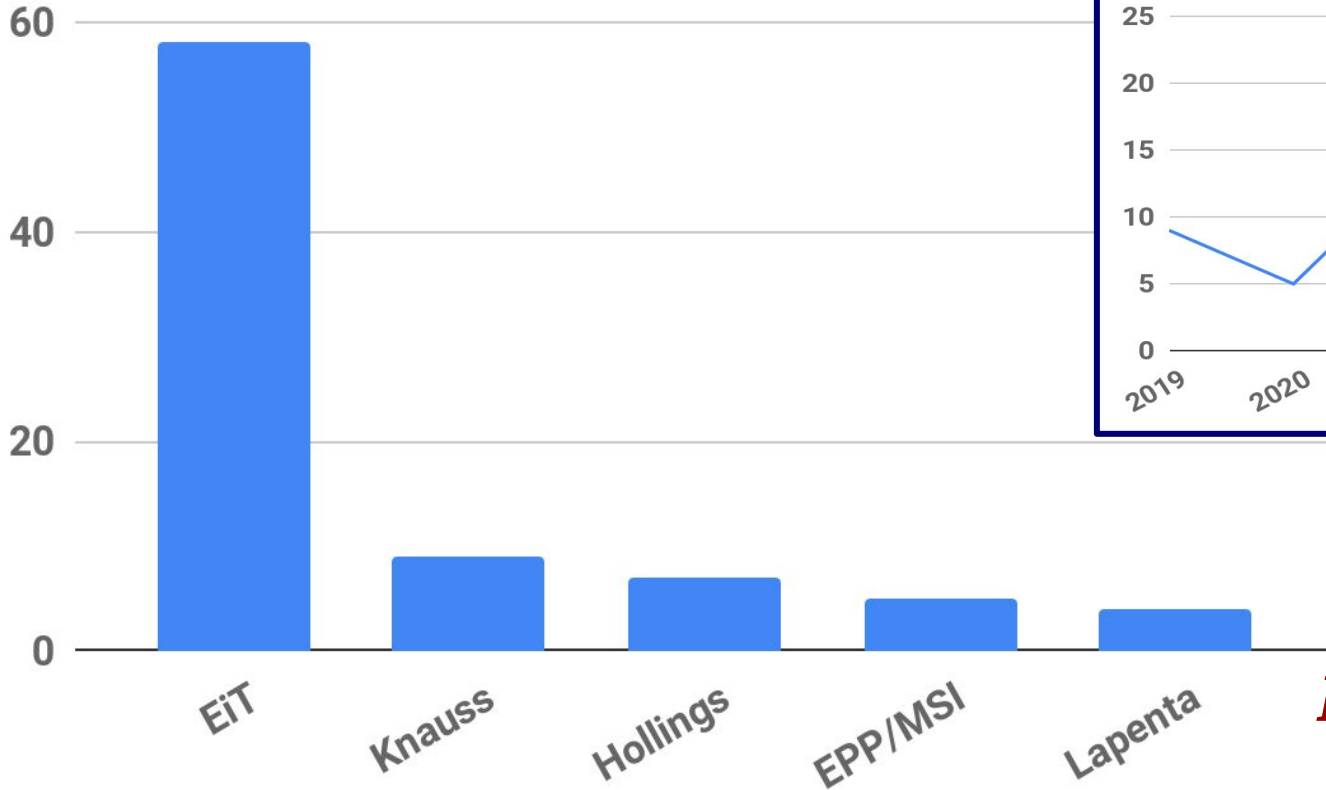
[Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship Program](#)

[Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program](#)

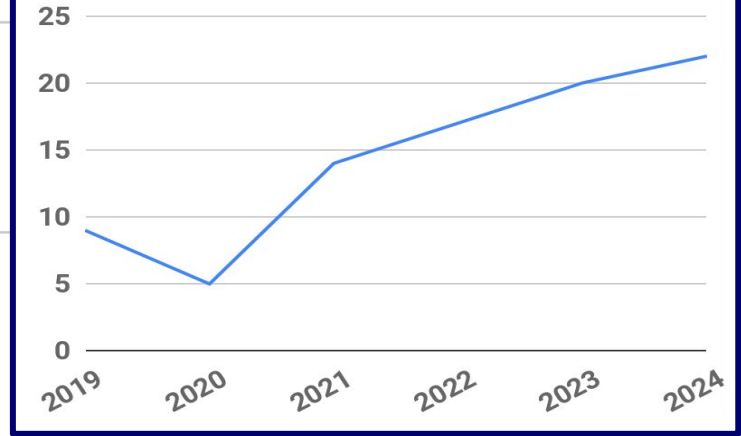
* EPP/MSI: Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions

OER Intern Breakdown: 2019-2024

OER Interns/Fellows by Program



OER Interns/Fellows by Year



Over 215 OER interns/fellows hosted since 2009!

Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute (OECI)

- **Ocean Exploration Trust (OET)**
 - [Science & Engineering Internship Program](#)
 - [Science Communication Fellowship](#)
- **University of Southern Mississippi (USM)**
 - [Ocean Explorers Program](#)
- **University of Rhode Island (URI)**
 - [Bridge to Ocean Exploration Program](#)

OCEAN EXPLORATION COOPERATIVE INSTITUTE



NAUTILUS LIVE
OCEAN EXPLORATION TRUST



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN
MISSISSIPPI



Explorer-in-Training (EiT) Program



Expedition-Based

- ~2-4 week, ocean mapping internship aboard NOAA Ship *Okeanos Explorer*
- Gain hands-on experience, learn the foundations of data acquisition and processing, and life at sea

Shore-Based

- 10-week summer internship
- Remote and/or in person (DC area)
- Work with mentors on research projects supporting NOAA Ocean Exploration mission areas

Learn more at: oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/okeanos/training

Programmatic Growth

- Addition of 10-week summer internship track in 2020
- Hired full-time Internship Program Coordinator
- Collaboration with Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
- 994 EiT applications in FY 24, 600% increase since FY 22



Internship Experience



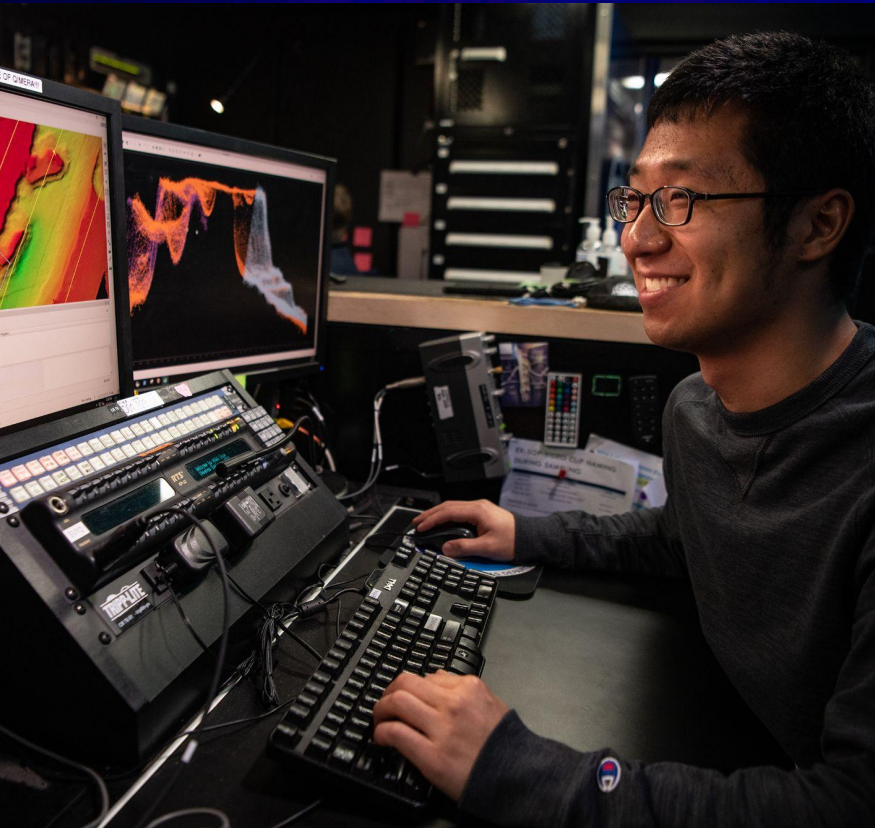
Activities/Programming

- 10-Week Interns:
 - Orientation: Intro to OER
 - Final report and presentation
 - NOAA Ocean Exploration Internship Symposium
- Expedition-based EiTs:
 - Welcome Meeting: Travel/expedition logistics
 - Final report to UCAR

Professional Development

- OER: Focus on ocean exploration topics, career paths, staff/former intern panels
- USM/TU/JSU: Job skills, study design, scientific presentations, resumes, etc.
- NOAA OAR: Focus on NOAA resources, career paths, Sr. Leadership coffee chats
- GEO-REU and USGS: Interns invited to join as interested and available

Impacts - Student Feedback



- 170 Explorers-in-Training since 2009
- Exit survey/interview results show:
 - High satisfaction with experience
 - Increased knowledge of the deep sea
 - Increased understanding of NOAA and career paths in ocean exploration
- Working to develop PRA-approved surveys to standardize feedback across interns

Alumni - Where Are They Now?



- ~65% pursued graduate degrees or work as scientists, technicians, research professors, educators, and leaders in various federal agencies, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, etc.
- ~15% have stayed in ocean exploration
- 3 joined NOAA Ocean Exploration as federal or contract employees
- Standardize longitudinal tracking to collect consistent metrics

Future Directions

- **Direct Hire Authority (DHA) eligibility** for 10-week EiTs through the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Act of 2019 (CCA)
- **Improve equity** in EiT application review and selection process
- **Improve diversity** in EiT applicants through targeted advertising
- **Promote cohesion** within and across OER and OECI intern cohorts



Future Directions *Cont'd*

- **Standardize OER intern experience:**
 - Intern handbook, guidance, work plan templates
 - Mentor support and resources
 - Seafloor mapping curriculum for expedition-based EiTs
- **Program expansion:**
 - Support additional EiTs by building partnerships with other NOAA programs and external organizations
 - Build deep-sea capacity for regional partners with targeted internship opportunities – modeled after EiT, but tailored to meet regional and community needs



Additional Resources



- [Explorer-in-Training Program web page](#)
- [Guidance for Application Review](#)
- [Internship Interview Template](#)
- [Guidance for Mentors and Expectations of Mentees](#)
- [2024 NOAA Ocean Exploration Intern Handbook](#)
- [2024 NOAA Ocean Exploration Mapping Intern Handbook](#)
- [Ocean Exploration Summer PD Schedule](#)
- [Internship Work Plan Template](#)
- [Previous Student Explorers](#)



Jesse Gwinn

Internship Program Coordinator

jessica.gwinn@noaa.gov

Liz Hoadley

Education Team Lead

liz.hoadley@noaa.gov

Kristen Crossett

Outreach & Education Division Chief

kristen.crossett@noaa.gov



OCEAN
EXPLORATION