Student Research Assistantships

California Public Utilities Commission and Schatz Energy Research Center

Applications are due by Wednesday, March 26, 2025, at 5 pm (Pacific)

The Schatz Energy Research Center has partnered with the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to support the hiring of 1-2 undergraduate or graduate students at Cal Poly Humboldt for a Summer 2025 research assistantship at the CPUC. This is a full-time, paid internship position expected to start on or near May 26, 2025 and continue through the end of the summer (week of August 18). There is potential for the internship to continue into the fall. This position is supported by CPUC funding.

Eligible applicants must be undergraduate or graduate students in good academic standing and must be currently registered at Cal Poly Humboldt (i.e. during Spring 2025 and for Fall 2025). The applicant must also demonstrate interest and enthusiasm for issues related to energy and environmental policy.

Who we are

Schatz Center

Since 1989, the Schatz Center has been a leader in applied research and project development for clean and renewable energy. Our current portfolio includes microgrid development, sustainable transportation design, carbon life cycle analysis, solar product testing, offshore wind feasibility studies, and planning and policy for clean energy access around the globe.

As residents of a rural coastal community, we are keenly aware of our social and environmental responsibilities. We are committed to increasing energy access and resilience for communities worldwide — and do so through clean and renewable design that reduces climate change and restores environmental and human health.

California Public Utilities Commission

The CPUC's Energy Division develops and administers energy policy and programs to serve the public interest, advise the Commission, and ensure compliance with the Commission's decisions and statutory mandates. The Energy Division provides objective and expert analyses that promote reliable, safe, and environmentally sound energy services at the lowest reasonable rates for the people of California.

The Energy Division provides technical support to the Commissioners and their offices, and the Administrative Law Judges. The Energy Division drafts resolutions for formal consideration by the Commission. Resolutions generally result from informal utility requests called Advice Letters, which are submitted by utilities to request rate and tariff adjustments.
The Energy Division through its Federal Policy and Ratemaking Section represents the Commission in Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and court proceedings.

The Energy Division assists the Commission in its regulation of four types of Investor-Owned Utilities (IOUs): Electric, Natural Gas, Steam and Petroleum Pipeline Companies. Commission-approved tariffs (official rates and terms of service) for these four types of IOUs are maintained by the Energy Division.

Position Summary

Student interns will support the team that works on Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) Transmission & Interconnection at the CPUC. Work schedules and reporting locations (in office, hybrid, or remote) will be determined by the CPUC hiring supervisor in collaboration with the candidate. Position activities may include:

- Investigate the permitting status of generation and storage resources in the interconnection queue that have secured transmission deliverability but are not yet contracted with an of/taker.
- Desktop research of the level of commercial interest in generation resources across various grid locations outside California, to inform staff's busbar mapping (the process of refining the geographically coarse IRP portfolios into plausible network modeling locations for transmission analysis in the Transmission Planning Process).
- Make planning insights from researching the location, type, and size of recent generation and storage projects that have come online in California and nearby, as compared to staff's projections from past years' busbar mapping (the process of refining the geographically course IRP portfolios into plausible network modeling locations for transmission analysis in the Transmission Planning Process).
- Research prospective pumped storage hydro projects to inform staff's busbar mapping (the process of refining the geographically coarse IRP portfolios into plausible network modeling locations for transmission analysis in the Transmission Planning Process).
- Finding opportunities to implement ideas from the literature on decision-making under deep uncertainty, in the IRP process, particularly in relation to transmission planning.
- Other duties as assigned

Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications

Education and Experience

- Eligible applicants must be undergraduate or graduate students in good academic standing and must be currently registered at Cal Poly Humboldt (i.e. during Spring 2025 and for Fall 2025).

Required knowledge, skills, and abilities

- Ability to communicate effectively in written and interpersonal contexts, including report writing, presentations, and email.
- Demonstrated interest and enthusiasm for issues related to energy and environmental policy.
- Ability to self-motivate and follow through on assignments.
- Ability and willingness to work with and learn from others effectively in a team setting.
- Proficiency with modern office computing, including word processing and spreadsheet analysis.

Desirable experience or training

(The following are welcome, but they are not required to be eligible for the position.)

- Experience related to energy services and environmental protection in disadvantaged communities.

Important note: This vacancy announcement includes both (a) minimum qualifications as well as (b) desirable experience or training. Research shows that many women and people of color, in particular, feel that they have to have 100% of both required and desired skills and experience before applying for a new job. We want to reiterate that the desirable experience and training options listed above are not required to apply for a position on our team. If you meet the minimum qualifications, we encourage you to apply.

Compensation

Interns will be paid an hourly rate between $16.50 - $22.11, depending on experience. It is anticipated that interns will work up to 40 hours a week during the summer and between 10 to 20 hours a week during the semester, if the opportunity is extended. Interns may also be eligible to receive tuition/fees support up to $4,125, if the position extends into fall. (Note: tuition/fees support will depend on other financial assistance that you may have). Support for professional development, including conference and related travel, may also be provided.

How to apply

Deadline

All application materials must be received by **5 pm Pacific Time (US) on Wednesday, March 26th, 2025**.

Materials

Applicants must submit the following via email to schatzenergy@humboldt.edu:

- A formal letter of application (cover letter - **1 page max**), attention CPUC Intern Hiring Committee, that:
    - Describes your background and what motivates you to apply.
    - Addresses your experience with the qualifications described above and provides examples of experience, including descriptions of relevant work and/or a listing/description of relevant college/university courses successfully completed.
- A resume

Note: your cover letter will be used as a writing sample to assess the quality of your writing.

Questions and inquiries

- For assistance with the application process, please submit an Accommodation Request Form, which can be at https://forms.humboldt.edu/spf-accomodation-request-form, or contact the campus ADA Coordinator at (707) 826-3626 or confidential fax at (707) 826-3625. For more information regarding accommodation, you may also visit the Cal Poly Humboldt Campus Disability Resource Center at https://disability.humboldt.edu/employee-accommodation. Individuals in need of a telecommunications relay service may contact the California Relay Service at (877) 735-2929 TTY.
- Learn more about our employment opportunities at schatzcenter.org/jobs.
- For additional information, please email schatzenergy@humboldt.edu or call (707) 826-4345.