

Dear Prospective Graduate Student,

Thank you for your interest in working with me. I apologize for the impersonal nature of this form letter, but I get many requests from interested students and it saves both you and me time if we begin here.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you some basic information regarding my research program, possibilities for prospective students, and some background on my work, UC Irvine, the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

After reading this letter, please browse the Mooney Lab website and then contact me with further information about you and your research interests, including:

- 1) CV or resume (including references and their contact info)
- 2) A brief statement of purpose, including:
 - Your relevant background
 - Your research interests, with special reference to how they fit into the work of the Mooney Lab
 - The reasons you want a graduate degree

The statement need not be polished at all, just as long as it gives me the requested information.

I am interested in advising graduate students on any topic relating to the evolutionary ecology and community ecology and plant-animal interactions. All research projects must test and contribute the development of basic ecological and/or evolutionary theory. Within these parameters, I support research projects on systems/questions that make contributions to conservation biology and land management practices.

The methods I use include: manipulative field experiments; the collection, identification, and quantification of arthropod communities; rearing of arthropod colonies and host plants in growth chambers and greenhouses for laboratory study; stable isotope analysis of plants and arthropods for the characterization of food web structure; the measurement of ecologically-important traits in arthropods and plants, including plant and arthropod chemical defense; observations of animal behaviors; and complex univariate and multivariate statistics. I also encourage students to collaborate with other labs, at UC Irvine and elsewhere, to learn novel techniques.

There are abundant field sites in the UC Irvine area, ranging from wetland and intertidal communities to coastal sage-scrub to chaparral to coniferous and oak forests. At UCI we have growth chamber facilities, greenhouses, and sites for common garden experiments at the UCI Arboretum. Further afield, the UC Nature Reserve System and UC Agricultural Experiment Stations offer field sites and logistical assistance around the state. Finally, I will support research projects conducted elsewhere in North America, or abroad.

I expect to train students in my lab broadly, including natural history and taxonomic knowledge of plants and animals (mostly arthropods), classic theory in our field, as well as experimental design and statistics. I encourage all lab members to attend several seminars and discussion groups, irrespective of the specific topic. I will encourage my entire lab to attend (and presents talks) at the Ecological Society of America annual meeting each year.

Funding for graduate students in the Departments of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and is excellent. I encourage students to conduct independent projects outside of my own research program, but also welcome collaborations where our interests overlap. The independence that I encourage in my students means that when students graduate, they are ready to run their own research program and are competitive on the job market. This also means that I strongly encourage students to write grant applications and obtain their own funding.

If, after reading this, you are interested in joining the Mooney Lab please contact me at mooneyk@uci.edu with your statement and CV/Resume.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kailen Mooney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

Kailen Mooney