

Regional Water Quality Control Board  
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report  
Thursday, February 6, 2020  
Regional Water Board Office  
Santa Rosa, California

**ITEM:** 5

**SUBJECT:** Opportunities for Regional Water Board Collaboration with Sonoma State University's Center for Environmental Inquiry (*Dr. Claudia Luke, Sonoma State University*)

**BOARD ACTION:** This is an informational item, only. No action will be taken by the Regional Water Board.

**BACKGROUND:** In the last 7 years, the WATERS Collaborative, a partnership between Sonoma State University's Center for Environmental Equity and Sonoma Water, has engaged 3,164 students and 50 faculty to work with more than 30 community partners on social, economic and environmental aspects of water ([cei.sonoma.edu/waters](http://cei.sonoma.edu/waters)). Over the next decade, society will face unprecedentedly complex challenges that require new ways of identifying and implementing water solutions. University-agency partnerships have a unique role to play in finding new ways forward. They bring the resources of academia — diverse expertise of faculty, new perspectives and energy of students, laboratories and research libraries — to help tackle the challenges faced by local communities. Now, a new WATERS Collaborative initiative called "Rising Waters" seeks to deepen meaningful engagement on complex water challenges. In March 2020, a Rising Waters Working Group composed of water agencies, organizations, and universities will jointly identify complex priority issues and recruit multi-disciplinary faculty-student teams to tackle the issue. Teams will gather data and ideas, and then flesh out a range of solutions that might never have been imagined through traditional structures.

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS:** [cei.sonoma.edu/waters](http://cei.sonoma.edu/waters)