

Metcalf

University of Rhode Island • Metcalf Institute

IMPACT REPORT

Metcalf Institute
University of Rhode Island
College of Environment
and Life Sciences

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2025



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PHOTOS: THERESE IACONO



FARA WARNER
Executive Director



ERIN EDMONDS
Assistant Director



ETHAN BROWN
Training Program Coordinator



MEL THIBEAULT
Donor and Alumni Engagement Manager



ABBIE LAHMERS
Communications Specialist



JANA COCHRAN
Scientific Research Grant Assistant



SPECIAL THANKS TO JESSY MINKER
Impact Report Consultant

MEET THE METCALF TEAM

LETTER FROM THE TEAM

Dear friends, 2025 has certainly been a season of change—and growth—at Metcalf Institute. Change can be challenging, but it can also be a powerful catalyst. At Metcalf, we've embraced this moment of evolution to reimagine what's possible. We've welcomed new team members, launched ambitious new programs, and deepened our commitment to equity and impact in climate and environmental reporting. As a **newly energized team**, we are honored to carry forward the Institute's mission of building inclusive, accurate, and community-driven science communication. With fresh perspectives and a shared passion for Metcalf's core values, our team is laying the groundwork for the Institute's next 27 years!

This year, we proudly introduced **new fellowship programs**—designed in direct response to the needs of early-career journalists and researchers from historically marginalized communities. These programs are not just about training; they're about shifting who tells the story of science and how it's told. And they're already making a difference.

We've also built **new partnerships** with media organizations, research centers, and community-led environmental groups. These collaborations are helping us bridge the gap between science and the public by connecting trusted messengers with the tools and networks they need.

We are deeply grateful to you—our community of supporters, alumni, and partners. Your belief in Metcalf's mission gives us the courage to embrace change, the wisdom to build with care, and the hope to keep pushing forward.

This is a new chapter, and we're just getting started.

With appreciation and excitement,

The Metcalf Institute Team



PHOTO: THERESE IACONO

EXPANDING METCALF'S FELLOWSHIPS AND TRAININGS IN A TIME OF CRISIS



In 2025, Metcalf expanded our journalism fellowships and trainings to impact many more journalists around the world as the effects of global climate change impacted more and more communities.

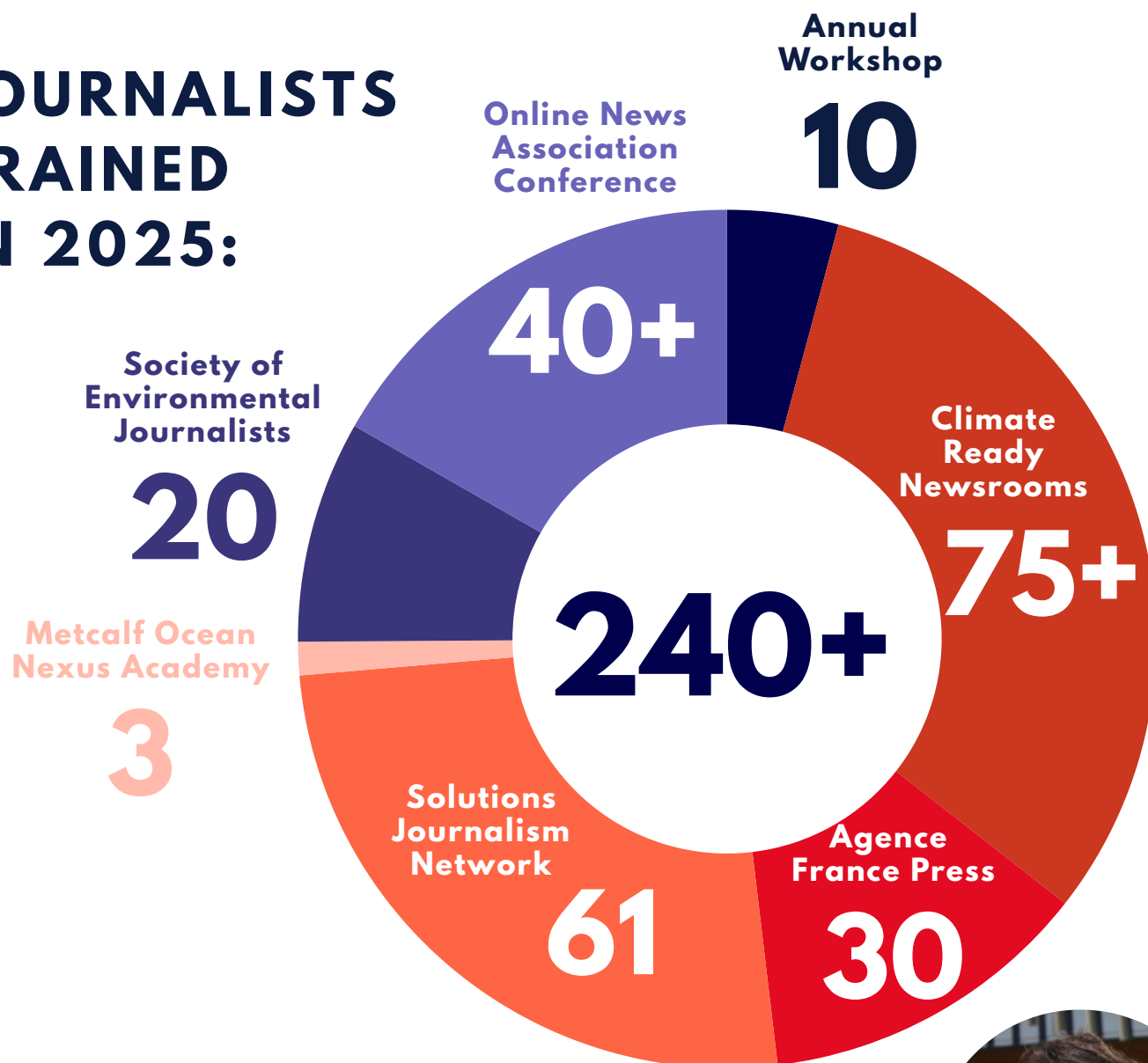
The **Metcalf Ocean Nexus Academy** (MONA) in partnership with Ocean Nexus and The Uproot Project brought three journalists of color to campus this summer to dive deeply into social justice and equity issues in ocean research. Their investigations on deep sea mining, the global seafood trade, and the negative impact of cruise ships on the environment are all reported through a lens of equity and justice.

The Open Newsroom brought three STEAM students with no journalism background together for 12 weeks in the summer to learn how to be community science journalists. The work produced by the three students was presented at a community event in Providence, R.I.

Seventeen newsrooms, and more than 75 journalists, have deepened their knowledge of climate and environmental science through our **Climate Ready Newsrooms Fellowship**, which shifts the focus from individual journalists to newsrooms to create systemic change within media organizations to build climate coverage into their daily work.

Finally, Metcalf built a four-week virtual climate and environmental science training for **Agence France Press** that trained 30 journalists around the world in attribution science, scientific uncertainty, and how to read and translate scientific studies as the global news agency deepens its commitment to covering climate change around the world.

JOURNALISTS TRAINED IN 2025:



“

One of the big takeaways we got from the Metcalf (newsroom) fellowship was the fact that a lot of people out there care about climate but aren't talking about it. We were also inspired by the opportunities we discussed in the fellowship to better hear from and work with the communities we serve. To better serve our readers and get people talking about what they want to know about, the *Banner* decided to start its Encyclopedia Climatica project to hear directly from community members about what burning questions they have about the climate and environment. We'll do the reporting and give the answer to the question with context to how it fits into the lives of our readers.”



**AVERY
BLEICHFELD**

The Bay State Banner
Science Editor



DEEPENING ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

In 2025, Metcalf increased and diversified the ways that we engage with our alumni.

We reimagined our **Annual Public Lecture Series** to be a collaborative program that partners with URI entities and external organizations to bring the lectures to more diverse audiences, while featuring our Metcalf alumni. In April, Daniel Wolfe, a climate reporter with the *Washington Post* and a 2024 Metcalf alum, moderated an important interview with Genevieve Guenther, author of the best-selling book “The Language of Climate Politics: Fossil Fuel Propaganda and How to Fight It,” on campus.

In October, we hosted a panel discussion featuring three of our alumni from the SciComm Identities Project, a partnership between Metcalf and Michigan State University’s Knight Center for Environmental Journalism whose goal is to train the next generation of science communicators. Moderated by Metcalf’s Executive Director Fara Warner, the fellows discussed their work and current affairs at the intersection of climate change, public health, food access, and equity.

OUR NEW MONTHLY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER IS SET TO LAUNCH IN JANUARY 2026! FOLLOW US ON LINKEDIN TO STAY UP-TO-DATE ON EACH ISSUE.

IN 2025, WE ALSO:

Began hosting monthly one-on-one calls with our alumni to learn about their work and better understand how Metcalf can continue to be a resource for them.

Created [a form](#) for alumni to share their amazing accomplishments and news, which we've highlighted on [our website](#), in our [monthly e-newsletter](#), and on our social media channels.

1,043

NEW LINKEDIN
FOLLOWERS

(11/12/2024-11/12/2025)

4.7K

ENEWS SUBSCRIBERS

(AS OF 11/1/2025)



STARTED A BLUESKY
ACCOUNT:

@metcalfuri.bsky.social

“

My fellowship at Metcalf came at a perfect juncture in my journalism career. By then, I was several years into building a beat reporting on climate justice, which I was really drawn to because of my personal lived experiences growing up in a low-income, immigrant household in south Florida, where intensifying hurricanes, rapid sea level rise, and extreme heat waves were increasingly recurrent staples of the landscape. At the time, I was also working on my first book, *Devoured*, which investigates what one infamous invasive plant can tell us about American attitudes toward the food on our plates, the changing climate, and the migration of species—including humans. Metcalf's fellowship gave me the tools I needed to bolster my research for the book, which required a thorough understanding of the world of scientific research and academia as I dug into questions like: How much land is covered by kudzu in the U.S.? How much money has been invested in mitigating it? And when it comes to tracking the growth, economic impact, and management of invasive species, who is responsible for what? The impact of this fellowship on my book development process, and broader climate journalism career, is difficult to overstate.”

**AYURELLA
HORN-
MULLER**

AWJ 2022 Alum



EXPANDING IMPACT THROUGH COLLABORATION

At Metcalf Institute, we believe that advancing public understanding of climate and environmental science hinges on the strength of our partnerships. We do not—and cannot—do this work alone. In 2025, two important collaborations gave us the opportunity to both deepen the expertise of the journalists we work with and expand our reach to a wider audience.

METCALF OCEAN NEXUS ACADEMY

Centering Equity in Ocean Journalism

The Metcalf Ocean Nexus Academy (MONA) is a collaboration between Metcalf Institute, [Ocean Nexus](#), and [The Uproot Project](#). This partnership began with a simple question: how could Metcalf help Ocean Nexus—a global research institute focusing on equitable ocean governance—share its work with a wider audience? The answer led to the creation of a new fellowship designed to support journalists reporting on ocean sustainability, equity, and justice. With a mission to bring diverse voices to the forefront of environmental and climate journalism, and a desire to create opportunities for mid-career journalists of color, The Uproot Project was a logical additional partner of the MONA collaboration.



In MONA's inaugural year, three journalists traveled to the University of Rhode Island for an immersive, three-day fellowship, where they worked closely with Ocean Nexus scholars to deepen their understanding of how current systems of global ocean governance perpetuate colonial and discriminatory practices, exacerbating inequities both internationally and locally. MONA is nurturing a community of journalists who can tell ocean stories that are accurate, nuanced, and grounded in justice. Next year, we look forward to welcoming another three fellows to URI's campus in early May.

**WATCH A BEHIND-THE-SCENES
VIDEO OF THE 2025 MONA
FELLOWSHIP ON OUR
[YOUTUBE CHANNEL](#)**

SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM NETWORK

Expanding the Reach of Climate Communication Training

Our partnership with the [Solutions Journalism Network](#) (SJN) broadens our reach to journalists around the world. SJN's global network and strong social media presence have been key to helping us reach a larger audience than we could alone. In 2025, Metcalf and SJN collaborated on three free trainings.

WATCH THE TRAININGS

[How to Cover Marine Carbon Dioxide Removal](#)
[Climate Coverage and Mental Health Training](#)

The first was offered in partnership with the CARES Initiative (Connecting Audiences, Reporters, Emotions, and Sources) to address mental health for climate journalists. This fall, Jaime Palter of URI and David Ho of the University of Hawai'i led a webinar for journalists on the often misunderstood topic of marine carbon dioxide removal. In December, Chris Lane, Professor and Chair of URI's Department of Biological Sciences, brought together artists and scientists to explore the topic of visualizing environmental change.



JAIME PALTER

Associate Professor
of Oceanography,
URI



All of the Metcalf events I've participated in have been expertly crafted so that the conversations with journalists feel deep, meaningful, and productive. They have led me to think of new ways to communicate, and given me connections with writers and radio personalities that have helped to promote the fabulous oceanographic science happening at URI and its value to the state and beyond."



I had always envisioned designing a trust-building process between journalists and researchers working on environmental justice. Through this partnership, that vision was able to take shape. It has been a wonderful experience, and I am grateful for Metcalf and the fellowship that made this proof of concept possible."

YOSHITAKA OTA

Director of
Ocean Nexus
and Professor
of Marine
Affairs, URI



WHAT'S NEXT FOR METCALF?

INCLUSIVE SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

Metcalf Institute is bringing a fresh focus to Inclusive Science Communication (ISC) by engaging with the community to better understand its needs and ways to collaborate in the future. The Metcalf team hosted two visioning sessions in fall 2025, welcoming attendees of past ISC symposiums and other ISC practitioners. Training Program Coordinator Ethan Brown led an ISC training in October with 25 undergraduate students in URI's ENE 101 course, an introductory class in the Environmental Education degree program. In 2026, Metcalf will create and present its first ISC Train-the-Trainer program for Rhode Island's EPSCoR Program.

“

It was inspiring to see how science communication can be inclusive, accessible, and even fun, which is something that often gets lost when the topic of climate science becomes overly politicized.”

**STELLA
HARZOLD**

URI Student



METCALF AFFILIATED FACULTY

The Metcalf Affiliated Faculty Program (MAFP) will bring together science scholars affiliated with the Metcalf Institute to form a collaborative community focused on advancing science communication. Members will gain access to interdisciplinary resources, networking opportunities, and Metcalf's brand-new signature Science Talks series, which will showcase innovative research and insights.

MORE TRAININGS FOR SCIENTISTS

A new suite of trainings is now available, offering flexible learning opportunities in key areas of science communication. New workshops include Introduction to Inclusive Science Communication and Media Translation for Scientists, designed to help researchers communicate more effectively with diverse audiences. These trainings provide practical tools to enhance clarity, accessibility, and impact.

23 TRAINING
REQUESTS
RECEIVED

Fill out our form to
request a training!



PHOTO: THERESE IACONO

Ngoc Nguyen is partnerships and ethnic media editor for KFF Health News and California Healthline, where she leads an initiative to develop and expand editorial collaborations with ethnic media. Nguyen is an award-winning journalist whose reporting has appeared in dozens of publications, including The New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, and national public radio programs. Her investigative report on the health impact of wartime Agent Orange exposure won a 2014 national journalism award from the Asian American Journalists Association. Nguyen is an alumna of Metcalf Institute's 2005-2006 Environmental Reporting Fellowship Program.

Q&A WITH NGOC NGUYEN

Incoming Chair of Metcalf Advisory Council

WHY IS METCALF'S WORK SO IMPORTANT NOW MORE THAN EVER?

We're seeing a perfect storm of factors creating an environment in which science and facts are being undermined. The Trump administration has cut federal research funds, fired scientists and medical researchers at federal agencies in charge of protecting public health and the environment, and removed or halted updates to critical research data that informs health and environment policymaking decisions. Metcalf's work to empower journalists and scientists to effectively communicate about science with the public has never been more urgent.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GET INVOLVED WITH METCALF?

I'm a huge fan of the Metcalf Institute! My connection with the organization goes back a long way. As an early-career journalist, I was fortunate to receive a year-long fellowship (2005-2006) through the (then) Metcalf Institute for Marine and Environmental Reporting. I had covered environmental health hazards to nail salon workers, farmworkers, and communities affected by pesticide drift, but didn't really see myself as an environment reporter. The fellowship gave me the opportunity to study environmental science at URI for a month, followed by a one-year placement at the *Sacramento Bee* on the environment beat.

**“METCALF'S WORK TO EMPOWER JOURNALISTS AND
SCIENTISTS TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE ABOUT SCIENCE
WITH THE PUBLIC HAS NEVER BEEN MORE URGENT.”**

Q&A WITH NGOC NGUYEN (Continued)

WHAT ARE SOME OF METCALF'S GOALS THAT YOU WILL WORK TOWARD HELPING THEM ACHIEVE?

For more than two decades, Metcalf Institute has trained and empowered journalists and scientists in science communication, and that work has never been more critical. Metcalf is poised to be a premier national science communication organization. It needs continued support to carry out its successful annual science immersion workshops, and expand its regional climate and environmental science fellowships for local journalism.

HOW HAVE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH METCALF IMPACTED YOU?

Metcalf launched me on a path to report on environment and health. After the fellowship, I landed a job as environment reporter and editor for New America Media (NAM), a national news service for ethnic media. As special projects editor at NAM, I led an editorial collaboration with local ethnic media outlets and Climate Central to report on the projected impacts of sea level rise on the San Francisco Bay Area. More recently, Metcalf has given me the opportunity to play a leadership role as an advisory council member and incoming chair.

WHAT CHALLENGES HAS METCALF FACED IN THE PAST YEAR?

Metcalf has gone through both leadership and staff changes. The advisory council has brought continuity to the transitions. There have also been changes on the advisory council with several departures. We're actively recruiting new members with experience and expertise in fundraising, community engagement, science communication, journalism, and other disciplines.



PHOTO: THERESE IACONO

WHAT ARE YOU EXCITED TO WORK ON AS CHAIR OF METCALF'S ADVISORY COUNCIL NEXT YEAR?

I'm particularly excited about Metcalf's new Climate Ready Newsrooms initiative to help local newsrooms prepare to cover climate disasters. I'd love to help Metcalf develop a resiliency model that could be replicated across newsrooms.

2026 ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Metcalf Advisory Council welcomes a new chair to the council, Ngoc Nguyen, as Ricardo Sandoval-Palos (pictured right) departs. We thank Ricardo for his support and wisdom through all the transitions. In 2026, five new council members are joining with expertise in inclusive science communication, community engagement, journalism, and climate science. The new dean of URI's College of Environmental and Life Sciences – Metcalf's "home" at URI – Jean VanderGheynst joins as an *ex officio* member.



NGOC NGUYEN, CHAIR

Ethnic Media Editor,
KFF Health News



SIMON DONNER

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JEAN VANDERGHEYNST

Dean, College of the
Environment and Life
Sciences, URI
Ex officio

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

Thank you to all of our generous donors who help drive our mission of advancing effective climate and environmental communication, which is more important than ever. We cannot do this critical work without your support!

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Effective communication about climate change solutions is more important with every passing day. Your gift supports training for journalists and researchers that expands public conversations about the environment and can move people to action.

For more information on giving to Metcalf, please contact Donor and Alumni Engagement Manager Mel Thibeault: mel.thibeault@uri.edu



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