



# GALAPAGOS SCIENCE CENTER – GSC

An interdisciplinary Program to couple  
Human-Natural Systems and to integrate  
research, education, and outreach.

UNIVERSIDAD SAN FRANCISCO DE QUITO

In May 2011, the Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ, in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, constructed Galápagos Science Center on San Cristóbal Island. With an interdisciplinary focus on population, health, and environment, the Galápagos Initiative, led by the UNC Center for Galápagos Studies, is dedicated to innovative and transformative research and education that contributes to the conservation of the Galápagos Islands for future generations and sustaining island ecosystems and their social, terrestrial, and marine subsystems.

The Galápagos Science Center is the only institution of its kind in the Galápagos Islands. It represents a unique facility and a special opportunity to transform the World and to enrich our understanding of coupled human-natural systems in a world-renowned National Park, Marine Reserve & World Heritage Site. In addition, the Galápagos Initiative seeks to integrate research, education, and outreach through a seamless transition between the classroom, field and lab. In short, the Galápagos Initiative is a program of discovery, innovation, and integration in research, education, and outreach.







## What do we do:

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The Galápagos Initiative emphasizes the study of island ecosystems, coastal environments, and their direct and indirect linkage to global and local places as well as social and ecological forces of change. The Grand Challenges that frame the Galápagos Initiative are: (1) assess island ecosystems and resolve the social-ecological threats to their sustainability, (2) promote health and well being of people, animals, and ecosystems to better understand the complex interactions between people and environment, and (3) encourage stewardship and extend our knowledge of global environmental change, social and evolutionary adaptation, and the dynamics of global contexts and local places to benefit the Galápagos Islands, North Carolina, and the World.

## How do we do it:

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The Galápagos Initiative draws from varied talents and experiences from the USFQ and Carolina faculty, students, staff, alumni, and special friends; it applies the lessons learned and new knowledge generated in the Galápagos Islands to the challenges faced by the State of North Carolina and the World. Our vision of globalized learning is to transform research, education, and outreach by creating links to international partners whose ideas and energies flow between UNC, USFQ, the Galápagos Islands, global island ecosystems, and world institutions to innovate, enlighten, and transform







## Why do we do it:

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The Mission of the Galápagos Initiative is to (1) improve the scientific understanding of the linkage between social, terrestrial, and marine sub-systems in the Galápagos Islands to develop policies and practices for the Galápagos National Park, and encourage wise stewardship throughout the Galápagos Islands and beyond, (2) develop an integrative and interdisciplinary program of research, education, and outreach that emphasizes the interactions among population, health, and environment, (3) educate UNC students, local people, and citizens of the world about the challenges to steward protected areas and marine reserves and the relevance of a coupled human-natural system approach to study island and coastal ecosystems and their sustainability, (4) translate the results of our integrative research into tools, techniques, and new knowledge about island and coastal ecosystems in the Galápagos and North Carolina, and (5) develop a template to address other similarly challenged settings around the globe through an integrative approach of innovation, discovery, and learning.





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