

**Dr. Paige P. Viren** serves as the Executive Director of the Sustainable Hospitality & Tourism Management (SHTM) Program at California State University, Monterey Bay. In this role, she leads a forward-thinking program that does more than prepare students for jobs—it empowers them to reshape the future of tourism. Under her leadership, the program empowers students not only to succeed in the workforce, but to lead the transformation of tourism—preparing them as stewards of destinations, advocates for social equity, and innovators of sustainable, regenerative business models.

In 2025, Dr. Viren was appointed to the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, which advises the Secretary of Commerce on matters related to the health and competitiveness of the nation's travel industry. Since 2024, she has served as Chair of the California Travel Association's Sustainability & Stewardship Committee, where she guides statewide initiatives at the intersection of tourism, community, and environmental impact. She also serves on the Advisory Board for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, supporting the preservation and responsible use of one of California's most iconic coastal ecosystems.

Since the early 2000s, Dr. Viren has conducted research focused on consumer behavior in adventure travel and sustainable, community-based tourism in rural areas. Her work has helped shape the industry's understanding of responsible travel, including contributing to the Adventure Travel Trade Association's revised definition of adventure travel. She has also collaborated with the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) on the Global Mapping of Climate Action in Tourism to advance sustainable practices worldwide.

She has worked extensively with rural communities to support economic diversification through tourism while safeguarding cultural and environmental integrity. As a U.S. State Department speaker, she has presented in countries including Albania, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Lithuania, Greenland, and Kosovo, promoting adventure and ecotourism as pathways to resilience and market expansion.

Dr. Viren has been a featured speaker at global forums such as the Urban Economic Forum and the Adventure Travel World Summit in Sweden, where she presented on "Harnessing Adventure Experiences for Climate Action." She has also served as a guest lecturer at institutions including Penn State University, Texas A&M, the University in Tartu, Estonia, and the University in Tirana, Albania.

She holds a B.S. and M.E. in Recreation & Tourism Studies from Bowling Green State University and a Ph.D. in Park, Recreation & Tourism Resources from Michigan State University. In addition to over 13 years of hands-on industry experience, she is a Certified Travel Consultant (CTC), a Certified Adventure Travel Specialist (ATS), and holds a Sustainable Tourism Destination Management Certificate from Cornell University. She also earned the GSTC Professional Certificate in Sustainable Tourism and is an official trainer for the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's Sustainable Tourism Training Program.

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