

Dean's Annual Report on the State of the College - 2009

As I enter my third year as dean of the College of Marine Science, I am proud to report that we remain on track to being recognized as one of the top ten oceanographic institutions in the world - and one that is universally viewed as a leader in applying science to societal needs through research, service, and training of future scientists.

Over the past year the College added five new members to its tenured faculty, and with them impressive expertise in areas critical to understanding the interaction of the Earth's oceans, atmosphere and land. I'm also pleased to report that our enrollment remains strong and that the quality of students applying for admission in AY 2010-11 has been truly impressive. Currently there are 111 highly talented graduate students pursuing degrees and 32 post doctoral fellows advancing knowledge in the areas of biological, chemical, geological, physical oceanography and sensor development and we look forward to growing that number over time.

In September, and in direct response to a recognized need by NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, the College launched a unique academic concentration in Marine Resource Assessment as part of its Ph.D. and MS programs. This program has already drawn extremely high interest from prospective students, as well as significant support from Federal agencies for both faculty positions and student fellowships. It also serves as the academic centerpiece for the Integrated Coastal Oceans Institute, a newly formed consortium of Federal, State and industry partners located in the Bayboro Harbor area of St. Petersburg. The Institute is intended to bring together stakeholders and scientists from Federal, state, private and academic institutions to work collaboratively, effectively and efficiently toward understanding the dynamics of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem, including important land-water interactions.

The establishment of the Marine Resource Assessment Program was a significant step forward for the College of Marine Science and resulted in a subsequent invitation from NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service to partner with a select group of oceanographic institutions in addressing three critical education and research priorities: increasing the number of fishery stock assessment scientists; developing transformational technologies for assessing fishery resources, habitats and ecosystems; and developing and implementing periodic training programs in fisheries science and management for fishermen, Council members and staffs, Congressional staffs and state agency personnel. While still in the discussion stage, the College looks forward to joining NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the University of Washington-Seattle in this highly important endeavor.

In late December, SRI St. Petersburg vacated its temporary office space in the Marine Science Laboratory Building and occupied a permanent laboratory facility within an easy walk of the peninsula. This move freed much needed space for the College, space that will be converted into modern laboratories for the pending \$2.1 Million renovation grant from NSF if granted. And in

early January 2010, the College helped to dedicate a new Science and Technology Building on the St. Petersburg campus that will provide additional classroom and laboratory space for both the College of Marine Science and USF St. Petersburg College of Arts and Science. This new building will also house some of the College's education and community outreach programs to include a portion of the Oceanography Camp for Girls and select Science Teachers Training Workshops. And it will be the site for the 2010 National Ocean Science Bowl Finals Competition that is being hosted by the College in late April.

Following the example of the Marine Science Student Advisory Council, the College's Post Doctoral Fellows and Research Associates have formed a similar organization to help with information exchange and professional development. The Marine Science Alumni Society, ably lead by Co-Chairs Bruce Barber, '84, bbarber@terraenv.com and Beau Suthard, '05, bsuthard@coastalplanning.net has been a big help in gathering alumni support. It also played a leading role in hosting a well attended reception and dinner to honor Dr. Lee Kump, Ph.D., '86, upon his return to campus to receive the USF Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2009. Finally, we have begun an active search for a new dean in hopes of having that individual selected and on-board by January 2011.

Private support for the College has been on the rise, even in these times of economic uncertainty. Several new graduate fellowships and research support funds have been established and a large equipment donation allowed the College to establish a much needed calibration laboratory within the Center for Ocean Technology. Of significance is the establishment of the Tampa Bay Chapter of the Achieving Rewards for College Scientists (ARCS) Foundation, which is the first of its kind established in Florida. The stated mission of this organization is to establish scholarship funds to attract talented ARCS Scholars to USF's Advanced Degree Programs in Cancer Biology and Marine Science. Members of this organization have been aggressive in their purpose and the first ACRS Fellowship will be awarded to an entering marine science student in September 2010.

With all the good news, there are still challenges that must be overcome to ensure we reach our full potential. The economy in Florida remains stagnant and when coupled with federal budget cuts, shrinking opportunities for research grants and rising costs, only ensures that we will continue to experience significant budget constraints in the future.

William T. Hogarth
Dean