

MIMES REPORT

Fall 2002

South Carolina Minorities in Marine and Environmental Sciences Summer Intern Program

Summary of Summer 2002 Activities

MIMES Program

The National Science Foundation/Ocean Science Program reviewed our internship program this summer. Ms. Elizabeth Rom and Dr. Susan Cook conducted a site visit on the final day of the program, which allowed them to see the students' final oral presentations. They were impressed by the progress we have achieved since the inception of the program and by the quality of the presentations.

In May, staff at the Marine Resources Center, including the Marine Resources Division and the University of Charleston, welcomed seven students to the summer program. After a day of orientation activities, including tours of all research facilities at the Center and an evening welcome social, the interns began their independent summer research projects.

Three of our students were from South Carolina State University (SCSU). Saadia Massey, a senior, studied under Dr. Steve Morton at NOAA/National Ocean Services. Ms. Massey investigated the effects of *Diarrhetic Shellfish Poisoning* in the New England states. Arena Richardson, a junior, studied under Drs. Susan Wilde and Alan Lewitus this summer. Ms. Richardson examined the effects of harmful algal blooms on a brackish pond ecosystem. The third student, Ethell Vereen, Jr., was funded by SCSU through a grant from NOAA Educational Partnership Program. Mr. Vereen is a recent graduate of SCSU and participated in our program last year. He returned to further investigate his 2001 research project with Drs. Alan Lewitus and Susan Wilde. Mr. Vereen investigated the environmental mechanisms that control microcystin production in *Microcystis aeruginosa*. Priscilla McCutcheon, a junior at Spelman College, studied under Mr. Robert Boyles. Ms. McCutcheon evaluated the various approaches to managing the red drum fisheries over the last 30 years.



Seated (left to right): Dr. Cecil Jennings, Saadia Massey, and Arena Richardson. Standing (left to right): Legna Varela Morales, Tracy Staton, Marielis Sexto Santiago, Ethell Vereen, Jr., Priscilla McCutcheon.

Legna Varela Morales, a senior at the University of Puerto Rico at Aguadilla, worked with Dr. Jack DiTullio and Ms. Sarah Riseman at the University of Charleston. Ms. Varela studied the effects of iron and light on Dimethylsulfoniopropionate (DMSP) production in marine phytoplankton. Another student at the University of Puerto Rico, Marielis Sexto Santiago, is a senior at the Mayaguez campus. She conducted her research under Dr. Denise Sanger and Mr. Brian Thompson. Ms. Sexto evaluated the linkage between land use and water quality in tidal creeks. Tracy Staton, a senior from Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina, conducted her research under Dr. Amy Ringwood. Ms. Staton studied the effects of Brevetoxin on oysters, *Crassostrea virginica*.

During the last three weeks of the program, students worked closely with their mentors in preparing written reports of research results and oral presentations. They gave their oral presentations on August 8, the last day of the program. During the closing ceremony, Dr. John Miglarese, MRD Deputy Director, presented the students with certificates of achievement.

Classroom Training and Peer Interactions

Workshops on statistics, scientific writing, and preparing graphic presentations were held during June. The workshops are designed to prepare the students for their work ahead. Research staff at the Marine Resources Division, Mr. Bill Roumillat, Mr. Chris McDonough, Mr. David Wyanski, and Ms. Karen Swanson, taught these classroom sessions.

Visiting Scientists-Outstanding Minority Role Models

Two scientists spoke to the students in July. Rear Admiral Evelyn Fields, Commander of NOAA Corps, visited the students and advised them on strategies for successful professional careers. Dr. Cecil Jennings, Leader of the Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Unit at the University of Georgia at Athens, presented a seminar on his current research to laboratory staff and students as part of our visiting scientist program. As a role model for all students on campus, Dr. Jennings encouraged interns to attend graduate school to further their careers in the Marine and Environmental Sciences.

Student Updates

Two of our 2002 interns, Arena Richardson and Ethell Vereen, presented their research at the 2002 Southeastern Estuarine Research Society meeting. Mr. Vereen won the Student Presenters Category and free *Estuarine Research Federation* membership. He entered the Environmental Health graduate program at the University of Georgia in Athens in fall 2002. Ms. Richardson also presented her work at the 1st Annual Research Showcase and Training Conference at SCSU where she won first place in the Biological Sciences oral presentations. Another 2002 intern, Tracy Staton, attended the 57th Annual Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Minorities in Natural Resources Committee meeting in Baltimore, Maryland.

She spoke to the attendees about the importance of research internship projects and highlighted the results of her summer project. Marielis Sexto (2002) has been accepted to attend a Life in Extreme Environments and Biotechnological Applications Workshop in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Marielis will present her summer research at the 2003 ASLO-Aquatic Sciences Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT.

Marla Taylor (1997) will receive a Master's Degree in December with a double major in Public Health concentrations in Maternal Child Health and Health Education and Communication.

Taconya Piper, a 1999 intern, is working on her Master's Degree at the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore. She is currently an EPA Graduate Research Fellow and will begin a Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship sponsored by the National Sea Grant Program in February 2003. She plans to graduate in May 2003.

Best wishes to Tiffany Lee (2000), on her marriage to Brian Griggs in August 2002. Mrs. Griggs is currently working on her Master's Degree at Clemson University in South Carolina.

Please continue to let us know what you are doing and where you are. All alumni updates are published in our newsletter. We would appreciate telephone numbers, home, and e-mail addresses. Thanks!

Tell a Friend!!

It may seem early to be considering recruitment for next summer's internships, but students who are interested in science and research are somewhat rare. The high quality of our past interns suggests that some of their friends might be interested in a similar summer experience. Please encourage any minority undergraduates interested in science or policy/research management to check out our web site.

Opportunities

The following websites contain information on other research opportunities available for undergraduates:

www.aslo.org/mas

www.nsf.gov/home/crssprgm/reu/start.htm

www.savstate.edu/scitech/marinesci/fly2001.htm



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Program's web page: www.dnr.state.sc.us/marine/minority

