



The Times

Marine scientists honored for work

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NEW BRUNSWICK -- A team of marine scientists at Rutgers' Cook College and Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences was honored during the Cook College and New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station's 13th annual awards dinner April 27. The award was presented by Bob Goodman, executive dean of agriculture and natural resources.

The National Research Council has highlighted the need for an integrated ocean observation capability and the platform to disseminate the knowledge from scientists to the public. This capability has been achieved by Cook College and the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences over the last decade with the development of the Rutgers University Coastal Ocean Observation Lab (RU COOL). RU COOL is acknowledged as one of the most advanced integrated ocean observation and data dissemination platforms in the world.

"The success of the system reflects the partnership and team work of the RU COOL team," said James Miller, chairman of the Department of Marine and Coastal Sciences. "This award recognizes their groundbreaking interdisciplinary efforts that are changing the way humans interact with, use and manage the world's oceans."

The COOL group represents three collaborative groups, each with a different function. The Operations Center, directed by Joshua Kohut of East Windsor, is focused on running an integrated ocean observatory 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. The Operations Center provides environmental data that enables studies spanning biology and physics. This research is conducted by Scott Glenn of Hopewell, professor in physical oceanography; Oscar Schofield of Princeton, associate professor in biological oceanography; and Robert Chant of Highland Park, assistant professor in coastal and estuarine dynamics. The combined results from Operations and Sciences teams are used to enable the education and outreach efforts of Janice McDonnell of Cranbury, director of education and outreach at the COOL lab.

"Taken together, this teamwork allows the COOL group to fulfill their goal to discover and communicate critical and exciting science about our planet for the benefit of society by providing a sustained presence in the ocean for scientific research, technology development, education and outreach," Miller said.

The COOL lab has had an impact on state, national and international levels. In New Jersey, the group is working with the state Department of Environmental Protection to improve its ability to monitor coastal water quality by using autonomous vehicles to map lack of oxygen in the bottom water. The COOL group also is advising the state Department of Transportation on cleanup strategies for the lower Passaic River, and is working on national and international levels.

In addition to the traditional graduate program offered by COOL, a new master's program in oceanographic technologies has been developed. The team also has focused on promoting ocean literacy through the development of a broad range of products and services that leverage off the COOL operations and science efforts serving K-12, community college and university educators; the private sector, news media and nonprofit organizations.

"The ultimate goal," Miller said, "is to bring the ocean to the world."

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