

VIMS welcomes new class of graduate students

(August 23, 2011) The Virginia Institute of Marine Science welcomes 15 new graduate students to its Gloucester Point campus this week, bringing overall enrollment in the College of William and Mary's School of Marine Science at VIMS to 102 students.

The entering students all have research experience and have traveled the world—from Antarctica to China—to conduct their studies. VIMS also welcomes one of the first students to graduate from William and Mary with the College's new minor in marine science.

Professor Linda Schaffner, Associate Dean of Academic Studies at VIMS, says that selection of this year's class was highly competitive. "They're a savvy and talented group," notes Schaffner. "They bring a wealth of research experience and academic knowledge that will further enrich the graduate program at VIMS."



The 2011 School of Marine Science matriculating class.

The members of the 2011 matriculating class at VIMS already have more than a dozen scientific papers published or in review. They've been on commercial fishing vessels and one has worked with the autonomous underwater vehicle Fetch.

Research experience and academic excellence

The new students arrive at VIMS with a number of accolades and research experiences already in hand:

- Britt Dean, a graduate of the University of Texas, brings experience from research positions in two components of NOAA's National Estuarine Research Reserve System, the Apalachicola Bay Reserve in Florida and the Mission-Aransas Reserve in Texas.
- Haley Garrison graduated from William & Mary in 2011 as one of the first to complete the new minor in Marine Science. She was the co-founder and first President of the W&M Marine Science Club.
- Carissa Gervasi, who comes to VIMS from Roger Williams University in Rhode Island, won a Best Student Paper Award from the American Fisheries Society for her study of flounder diets in Narragansett Bay.
- Miram Gleiber was an honors student at William & Mary, graduating with a double major in Biology and Environmental Science. She has already sailed on one research expedition to the waters of Antarctica and another to the mouth of the Amazon River as part of field programs at VIMS.

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- Daniel Kaufman arrives at VIMS from the University of Maryland, where he was an Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholar. Funded by NOAA, the Hollings scholarship recognizes academic distinction and research experience in the natural sciences.
- Michel “Tony” Nalovic, a native of French Guiana, is a NOAA Collaborative Fisheries Research Fellow and has worked with industry and NGOs around the world for nearly 10 years. For his master’s research at VIMS, he will test new gear for further reducing sea-turtle bycatch in the shrimp trawling industry.
- Patricia O’Leary was a Presidential Scholar at Randolph Macon College in Ashland, Virginia, where she studied mercury levels in freshwater fishes for her senior thesis.
- Sikai Peng comes to VIMS from the Ocean University of China in Qingdao. He will be studying the oyster parasite *Perkinsus* for his dissertation research at VIMS.
- Lela Schlenker, who arrives at VIMS from Smith College in Massachusetts, was a Collegiate Rowing Association National Scholar Athlete for two years. She has crewed on a commercial trawler and studied shrimp-farming practices in Ecuador.

The School of Marine Science at VIMS

The School of Marine Science at VIMS is one of five graduate and professional schools of the College of William and Mary. It awarded its first Masters degree in 1943 and inaugurated a Doctoral program in 1964. Nearly 900 marine scientists have now earned graduate degrees through the program. Graduate studies and research opportunities are offered in marine science, oceanography, fisheries and marine policy.

VIMS has an enviable record of producing graduates who take on leading roles in academia, government, and industry. VIMS grads head up the University of Maryland Center of Environmental Science, the Virginia Seafood Council, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, one of the leading environmental consulting and engineering firms in the northeastern U.S., and the Smithsonian’s new Ocean Hall, among many other leadership positions.