

**Southern Association of Marine Laboratories
Annual Meeting Notes
May 11-12, 2012**

Host: Florida Gulf Coast University

- Welcomed by FGCU Provost Ron Toll
- Introduction of delegates
- Overview of FGCU by Aswani
 - Marine & Ecological Sciences
 - Ecological research programs
 - Terrestrial ecology, ecosystem modeling
 - Systems ecology/GIS
 - Limnology-periphyton
 - Wetlands ecology-mangroves
 - Water quality policy & assessment
 - Estuarine and coastal research
 - Paleoecology & paleo-oceanography
 - Nutrient biogeochemistry
 - Microbial ecology
 - Organic contaminant analyses
 - Bacterial remediation of nutrients and contaminants
 - Coastal eutrophication
 - HABs
 - Marine geology/geochemistry
 - Climate change
 - Ichthyology and fish ecology
 - Molluscan ecology
 - Shellfish biology
 - Ecotoxicology
 - Pathophysiology
 - Habitat restoration
 - Landscape ecotoxicology
 - Geobiology
 - New construction: Whitaker Hall – Sciences
 - Studio style call rooms—lab and lecture integrated
 - Core instrumentation facilities
 - Animal care facilities
 - BSL2/3 facilities
 - Field ecology, cellular and molecular biology, marine and environmental sciences, analytical and biochemistry facilities
 - New construction: academic building (Platinum LEED certified building)
 - Molecular sciences, cell biology, chemistry and marine science moved from Whitaker

- Core instrumentation
 - BSL 2/3 facilities
 - Flexible lab space
 - Scale-up model class rooms
 - Vester Marine Field Station
 - Algal and larval culture facility
 - Lab/classroom facilities 2000 sft
 - Seawater systems
 - Raceways and grow-out facilities with running seawater
 - 4 apartments for visiting scientists
 - Docks
 - 8 research vessels (18-25 ft)
 - Easy access to diverse habitats
 - Faculty expertise
 - Diverse
 - Rapid growth/many new hires
 - Anticipate hiring 50-75 new faculty in next 5 years
- SAML lab updates
 - Mote Marine Lab (Kumar)
 - Successful implementation of strategic plan
 - Hired 3 new post-docs
 - NSF REU renewed for another 3 years
 - Donor bequeathed \$4M for fisheries aquaculture research program
 - U Miss NIUST (Ray Highsmith)
 - Source of funding: NOAA/NURP—program zeroed out
 - Pursuing grants in coral & sponge diseases, hi res mapping with AUVs (acoustic and photo-imaging)
 - Partnership with U Miss and USM: undersea vehicles directed by Vernon Asper at USM
 - Seafloor observatory (~ \$9 mi from oil spill), installed by 2005
 - GRB grant \$6.75M/yr for 3 years
 - Skidaway Institute of Oceanography (Jim Sanders)
 - 2 new faculty hires this fall
 - Increase in State funding during past year
 - NOAA \$\$ for marine sanctuaries, as pass-through
 - Boat program doing well—more NSF days
 - Hired new marine superintendent
 - Jacksonville University (Quint White, Dir of Marine Science Research Facility)
 - Invited us to have SAML meeting at JU
 - Hired 1 new faculty member
 - \$100K challenge gift to build new dock and a solar-powered floating classroom
 - Many organizations as part of the facility: good synergies
 - FWRI, St John’s WMD, Duval County public schools

- HBOI-FAU (Shirley Pomponi, Director, Cooperative Institute for Ocean Exploration, Research, and Education)
 - Manned submersible program terminated in July 2011
 - New initiatives: Indian River Lagoon Observatory, Integrated Multi-trophic Aquaculture
 - Completion of new 40,000 sq ft research building in late 2011
 - 9 new research faculty hires in next 3 years; recruiting 3 in 2012 (Marine Robotic Engineering, Marine Biogeochemistry, Physical Oceanography)
- FIO (Jyotika Virmani)
 - Wrapping up \$10M BP awards
 - Involved in GRI funding—coordinated proposal writing; involved in two of the centers, and providing ship time support for 2 consortia
 - Membership grew from 20 to 26 members
 - New categories of membership: associate and affiliate
 - LBR was approved by legislature and governor; will provide additional support to upgrade research vessels
 - Operate Keys Marine Lab (with FWRI): FEMA funds finally came through; lab is fully recovered from damage from Hurricane Wilma
 - On-site director: Dr. Nancy Thompson (on IPA from NOAA)
 - New seawater system being installed
 - Collaborations with Mote lab in the Keys
 - FIO Council meeting at end of June
- College of Charleston (Bob Podolsky)
 - Bob is new director; he recognized the enormous legacy that Lou Burnett leaves as the director for the past 20+ years
 - Small facility: supports the work of about 12 scientists
 - Serves biology major of 900 and marine biology of 30 students
 - REU program running again this year; funding renewed last year
 - Renovations in two buildings, based on grants received
 - Fund-raising for a new building (about 2/3 of funding in hand) to house more faculty
 - Grad students put in a green teaching garden—to collect water off roofs and provide irrigation for gardens
 - Bob brought copies of most recent newsletter
- Baruch Institute, USC (Jim Morris, Director)
 - Stable consistent funding
 - Adding one new faculty (Pam Morris??); hiring
 - Funding received for building maintenance
 - University hiring to keep up with rising enrollments
 - Re-organization on campus has affected organization of lab
 - Marine sciences are now in School of Earth, Ocean, and Environment, in College of Arts and Sciences (search for a director in place; Madelyn Fletcher is interim director)
- Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation Marine Lab (Eric Milbrandt)
 - 10 year anniversary this year
 - Started as land trust; recently bought a 24-acre parcel

- Foundation still in land-acquisition mode
- Awarded Eco-Chrysalis award—in recognition of support for water and ecosystem quality and its value for tourism
- Started an observing system, partly funded through GCOOS and a NOAA grant
 - Focus on Caloosahatchee River
 - Involvement in policy planning
 - Has enhanced research effort and provided basis for new grants
- Sunset of capital campaign: \$2M
 - Strategy now to get consistent private gifts on annual basis, to be supplemented by grants and annual fund drive
- 3 Ph.D.s: geographer working on sawfish (fishery-independent surveys)—to explain distribution and behavior
- Outreach: community restoration projects (mangroves, oyster reefs)
- USM Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (Jeff Lotz)
 - Federal funding has been reduced—this affected the aquaculture program; however, the State provided support to cover some costs
 - NRDA funds filled in most of the funding that had been lost in fed funds
 - \$300-600K/yr in tithes on casinos
 - Replacement of a physical plant building damaged by Hurricane Kristina
 - Marine education facility lost during HK; settled with FEMA on payment
 - Also replacing toxicology building
 - Incentivized retirement program resulted in loss of 5 faculty: searching for director and 4 faculty: 3 fisheries positions (searching) and 1 molecular physiologist (hired)
- FWC FWRI (Gil McRae, Director)
 - Participates in monthly NRDA meetings as representative of NRDA Trustee Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
 - Bulk of FWRI funding is fee based (fishing licenses and license tags)
 - No cuts this year to HAB program
 - Bump up in panther program and alligator hunting program
 - Marine: diverse
 - Headquarters in St Pete
 - About a dozen labs around the state
 - Research priorities driven by mgmt. needs
 - Manatees on recovery trajectory and feds may downgrade listing; if downlisted, how to deal with rescues and necropsies
 - Coral list is expanding (80+ species being considered for listing); if so, FWRI will have to deal with monitoring
 - Traditionally strong fisheries program & stock assessment; work closely with state co-managed fisheries; hired new person (coastal wetlands ecologist) to bridge gap between fisheries and habitats—with a view towards approaching ECM
 - Cindy Heil went to Bigelow Lab; replaced by Alina Corcoran: relationship between eutrophication and nutrient loading to HABs.

- Oil spills: ongoing. GIS specialists have worked heavily with Coast Guard to feed into CG contingency plans. Plan is to shore up the plans vis-à-vis drilling in Cuba.
- New College, Pritzker Marine Lab (Sandra Gilchrist)
 - Enrollment of less than 800
 - In marine program: 3 biologists (2 fish biologists, 1 invertebrate biologist) and 2 psychologists (marine mammals)
 - New president coming in July; may provide new support for marine center
 - Foundation president retired; reorganization of foundation in progress; fund-raising has slowed until new foundation president is hired
 - Dr. Demski is putting together symposium on fish behavior
 - Plans to recruit 2 new faculty in next couple years
 - Research and education with undergraduates
 - Expanding outreach—underrepresented groups: looking at wound healing in corals
 - Expanding outdoor classroom capability
 - 2 new projects: mangrove genetics (albinism and relationship to toxins) and coral genetics (immune response/resistance to white band disease)
- Savannah State University (Sue Ebanks)
 - 30% growth in student body; no new faculty hires
 - Research interactions (FL and SC)
 - Interim president has been appointed permanent president; she is strong supporter of marine program
 - Undergraduate summer research programs (Bridge Program) have renewed funding. Advantage: students come for
- Medical University of South Carolina (Eric Lacy)
 - Endowed chair funded by lottery program
 - \$8M award for 2 chairs: one to med school and one for marine genomics (Lou Guillette); Lou will become director in July; Eric is retiring at end of July—but will remain active
 - Summer REU program in OHH; funded by NOAA training grant; 12 students this year; largely directed toward underrepresented groups
 - Minorities in Marine and Environmental Science (MIMES) summer program funded by EPA
 - Ph.D. program growing: 16 students. Students take courses at both med school and marine lab; integrated educational program
- TAMU Harte Research Institute (Wes Tunnell, Assoc Dir)
 - Endowment is still outside of the university foundation
 - 6 endowed chairs have all been hired and their labs are all in full swing
 - Harte model: combines science, policy, and socio-economics
 - New executive director: Larry McKinney
 - Sylvia Earle convinced Eric Schmidt to buy 2 RV's—sea trials in Germany and across the Atlantic: R/V Falkor will be in Gulf.
 - Have to be on Schmidt Ocean Institute board to get into this.
 - Foundation board directs where the ship will go and what it does.
 - Engaged in developing a “health of the Gulf of Mexico” report card

- Wetdog.com---if you want a shirt like the one Wes was wearing!!
- Florida International University (Joe Boyer, Director SERC)
 - 60,000 students
 - Nascent marine program on Biscayne Bay Campus
 - New hires going to this campus
 - School for Environment, Arts, & Society;
 - Joe is leaving FIU; going to Plymouth College in NH; will be a search for a new SERC director.
 - REU, Research for High School Students, Research for Teachers
 - \$2.3M renovation for water quality lab nearing completion; funds came from ARRA and university
 - 2 new boats: 26' Twin Vee and an airboat
 - Working with Mike Heithaus to develop new center—based in Key Largo: Marine Education and Research Center; hired E&O coordinator to get this started
- LUMCON (Nancy Rabalais, Director)
 - Oil spill and Mississippi River flood has kept them busy
 - GOMRI grant; LUMCOM coordinates the consortium (more details tomorrow); focusing mostly on coastal ecosystems (\$4M/yr for 3 years)
 - Completed repairs from Hurricane Katrina
 - 2 adult ed programs; many students coming through—HS, undergrad, and grad; reaching a different part of the community to get info out about coastal Louisiana ecosystems
 - Active in GCOOS; helping to develop hypoxia research plan.
 - Staff turnovers: a couple resignations. Anticipate 1-2 new hires. On hold until new board has been established.
 - LUMCON has a governing board: legislation in progress to expand membership and organization of the board.
 - LUMCON will have to develop a new five-year plan.

SAML Business Meeting

- Minutes. Motion: Jim Sanders; seconded: Joe Boyer. Approved (minor typos to be corrected).
- President's report
 - NR is president-elect of NAML, and serves as public policy chair
- Past-president's report [Nancy took notes]
- Treasurer's report: statement distributed (add it to minutes)
- Audit report (Jim Sanders, chair; Quinton White; Aswani Voley)
 - Signed audit report will go to Dave Eggleston; make pdf and incorporate it into the minutes NO
- Nominating committee: Aswani Voley (member-at-large, filling Jim Morris spot); John Rummel (replacing Joe Boyer vacancy)
- Future meeting plans:
 - Interest in having the meeting further up the coast—like in Virginia
 - But there's no one here from Virginia
 - Quinton White invited us to JU

- For 2015—maybe in Virginia (Jim Sanders will follow up)
- For 2014: Gulf venue—KML and MML Summerland Key Lab; LUMCON—ExCom will discuss and finalize
- Other meeting updates
 - Nancy reviewed notes from the NAML winter meeting in DC
- Recognition of emeritus members and past-treasurer
- Meeting adjourned at 12:27

General meeting resumed at 2:00 pm

- SAML/NAML Issue I: Building a better website
 - Lou drafted a list of what needs to be on the website, including what we need as administrative tools (e.g., membership lists, etc.); Lou will send this out to the membership for their input.
 - Need to identify a host institution, and identify the webmaster or liaison who would solicit info from the membership on a regular basis.
 - CMAST (Dave Eggleston) has server space, but the personnel are oversubscribed right now. He has a communication specialist who could handle the updates.
 - Dave will provide a cost estimate for set-up.
 - Jim Sanders: Costs: set up and annual maintenance
 - We can handle the set-up costs, but the annual maintenance would have to be in the order of \$2000
 - Eric Milbrandt has a contact person also; he will provide her name to Lou.
 - Issue about ownership of the SAML domain name: Jim Sanders moved and Gil McRae seconded that we buy the domain name. Motion approved unanimously. But Dave is going to check with Kumar to see under which name the website should be registered.
 - Nancy will approach NAML to present to them what we're proposing to do.

Reconvened on May 11, 2012, 8:35 am

- FSML Workshop Outcomes (Jim Sanders provided overview; Aswani Volety, Sue Ebanks, and Eric Milbrandt also attended the workshop and provided their comments)
 - [Get copy of workshop report to include in the minutes as an attachment]
 - Field stations and marine labs have a wealth of data
 - Time to get the data out and find a way to integrate, coordinate, and make the data available
 - Need central coordination for field stations (we have this already for marine labs, but not for field stations)
 - Didn't really identify the "grand science" ideas—Jim thought that that was where they fell short
 - No set of questions or ideas to take us into the next 40-50 years
 - Trying to get to the science through some case studies

- Sue: One of the cross-cutting groups was education; one suggestion was to reach out and provide opportunities for field access. This has worked well with the younger groups.
- Eric: strong desire of the FSML group to emphasize their importance to non-scientists; how do you place a socio-economic value on what a FSML provides to the community; there was a lack of social science expertise.
- Steering committee met in early May and prepared a draft report:
 - Developed a vision statement.
 - Drafted 4 goals (on handout)
- Plan is to get the report written, and then build different products to speak to different audiences.
- Discussion:
 - Shirley: Survey membership re: what kind of data our FSML's actually have
 - Joe Boyer: If you're close to an LTR, there's a way to get the data input and archived
 - IOOS RA's may be an option: there is a metadata obligation
 - Joe Boyer: Need to identify and digitize the data—can we do this for SAML members?
 - Jyotika: Once we've got the data identified, THEN we can determine what scientific questions we could develop AND it would also identify the societal benefit.
 - Joe: also need to ensure that data are backed up.
 - Action: once report is issued, determine how we want to proceed—perhaps with a workshop on data held by SAML labs

- Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative Consortium Projects (maybe provide URLs to the respective websites)
 - C-IMAGE (USF, Steve Murawski, PI) <http://cimage.rc.usf.edu/>
 - Ecosystem Impacts of Oil and Gas Inputs to the Gulf (UMiss/NIUST, Ray Highsmith, PI)
 - Effects of Macondo Oil Spill on Coastal Ecosystems (LUMCON, Nancy Rabalais, PI)

Restoration Policy, Planning, & Implementation

- Everglades Restoration (Mike Parsons, FGCU, Coastal Watershed Institute)
- NRDA plans related to the Macondo Oil Spill (Gil McRae, Director, Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission) [Link to the NRDA assessment report that Gil discussed: http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/FINAL_NRDA_StatusUpdate_April2012.pdf]