

**Coastal Studies Institute Board of Directors**

Spring Meeting: April 19, 2024, 10:00 – 12:00

**Location:** *CSI Rm.262 or Virtual via ZOOM*

**Link:** <https://zoom.us/j/2524755428?pwd=cjdWbGJqQVR0RVJ3U09Ba1Fvbk8rZz09>

**Meeting ID: 252 475 5428**

**Password: 8675309**

**Use WiFi network: ecu-guest**

Username: [csiguest@ecu.edu](mailto:csiguest@ecu.edu)

Password: 9DLrqKg3

## **MINUTES**

Members in Attendance: Orion Rolf Blizzard, Malcolm Fearing, Mark Garner, Kirk Havens, Steve Keen, Robin Coger, Reide Corbet, George Bonner, Mike Kelly, Sharon Paynter, Harvey Seim

Members Absent: Jack Bagwell, S. Paul O'neal, Norma Houston, Ken Halanych, Rob Ross, Margery Overton, Kuldeep Rawat

**1 Call to Order 10:02 AM**

**2 Roll Call**

**3 Consideration of Agenda – ALL APPROVED**

**4 Consideration of Minutes – ALL APPROVED**

**5 Updates from CSI Partners**

5.1 UNC-SO – Norma Houston (Unable to attend)

5.2 ECSU – Dean Kuldeep Rawat (Unable to attend)

5.3 NCSU – Dr. Margery Overton (Unable to attend)

5.4 UNC-CH – Dr. Harvey Seim – New hydrologist has been hired. New chancellor is adjusting well. No new business beyond that.

5.5 UNC-W – Dr. Ken Halanych (Unable to attend)

5.6 ECU –Provost Robin Coger – 4800 students will graduate on Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>. 1500 STEM students came to ECU for the first North Carolina state robotics competition. 2 dean searches are currently underway, more will begin in the fall semester.

**5.6.1** Names for replacement board members that the subcommittee provided have been given to the Chancellor who will make a selection soon. **Some members of the board expressed concern that replacements have not yet been identified, stating that the board was created by the community and cannot function as intended without full membership.**

**6 Executive Director’s Report – Dr. Reide Corbett**

**6.1** HOUSING UPDATES. Lack of available housing continues to be a major hurdle towards growing CSI. The current lease expires December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. A new request for bids will go out in June/July and will be largely the same as previous years: 16-30 beds and year to year lease for three years. This summer 30 of the 32 beds will be filled. Dare County and CSI looked into partnering at one point to build affordable housing/dorms on the CSI campus, however, the only way it would be cost effective for the county would be to build more units than the campus could support. **Some members of the board expressed their direct opposition to building affordable housing on the CSI campus.**

- 6.2 VESTA. Carbon capture project will create a large offshore barge that contains the mineral olivine, that works to draw carbon out of the atmosphere. The non-permanent barge will be 21 feet long, 2-3 feet tall, and will not stick out of the water. Permits were approved in January, building will begin in May. Dr. Eric Wade, Department of Coastal Studies, is collaborating with Vesta to conduct research about the community's perspective of climate change. **Director Corbett asks board members help Dr. Wade by making introductions for him to local community leaders.** He also believes the partnership with Vesta has, and will continue to be good for the institute and community. Carbon capture research has the potential to bring in new funding opportunities. Concern was raised about the environmental impact of the olivine mineral to local freshwater sources. To which the board was assured that all necessary permits had been obtained, local and federal, and that the amount of olivine being used is unlikely to be able to make a negative environmental impact.
- 6.3 UNIVERSITY OF THE GAMBIA. University officials from The Gambia visited ECU and CSI this spring. 10 years of academic partnership with ECU. CSI would like to establish a research partnership as well. The country has a large river system and coastline which makes it ideal for coastal research. University of the Gambia is looking into building coastal research facility. Dr. Stu Hamilton, Director of the Department of Coastal Studies, will be in west Africa this summer and will visit The Gambia if timing permits.
- 6.4 ACADEMIC PROGRAMING. 9 of the 14 students participating in the Semester at the Coast this semester had internships in the community, mostly outside of CSI. REU is in its fourth year. There were 199 applicants for only 9 slots. Applicants are selected based on a variety of factors including their research interests and ability to conduct research at their home facility. A new intern program has been established by Julie Keirn, who also coordinates the REU program. It will be available to high school as well as undergraduate students year-round.
- 6.5 NCROEP
- 6.5.1 HERO WEC was successfully deployed earlier this year
- 6.5.2 K-12 Programs have continued to develop with John McCord. New Education Outreach position will be posted and, hopefully, hired by the start of fall semester
- 6.5.3 Symposium had over 100 attendees this year
- 6.5.4 New partnerships with Clean Carolina, part of the NSF Regional Innovation Engines program, focused on clean manufacturing
- 6.5.5 NC State has now added courses about Blue Energy to the course catalog

- 6.5.6 New partnerships with TEAMER, an organization that brings together developers with facilities that are equipped to test their projects. George Bonner was recently made a member of the board. Currently, CSI is working on applications to be listed in TEAMERs database as able to test open water, and wave tank equipment, something that the new project manager will be responsible for completing.
- 6.6 OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT. John McCord and his team have created 3 new Lifelong Learner programs as well as 3 new family programs. Guided tours are being conducted on a bimonthly basis and are open to the public. As of now, more than 2,100 K12 students have visited the CSI campus for various events including school field trips, summer camps, and the new Soundside Science Scouts program which is a single-day camp offered on scheduled school vacation days throughout the school year. This summer CSI will again host 8 week-long camps for students, each consisting of 16 campers between the ages of 10-15. Dare County Schools has three seats in each camp that they offer as scholarships county students. In 2024 there are 10 Science on the Sound evenings scheduled, the average attendance has been around 50 per event. CSI's annual Open House is tomorrow, April 20th, 11 am – 3 pm.

## **7 Financial Report – Dr. Reide Corbett**

- 7.1 FY '24 BUDGET OVERVIEW. Campus safety upgrades constitute a significant portion of the FY24 budget. ECU Facilities Services recently covered the cost of replacing locks on classroom doors. In FY24 CSI purchased all necessary equipment to convert the entry doors to One Card controlled locks. CSI and Facilities Services are working to get equipment installed in FY25.
- 7.2 ICP - CSI POSITION CHANGES – FY '24 TO DATE
- 7.2.1 Vacated:
- 7.2.1.1 Brandon Pfahlert – Horticultural Specialist-Facilities Services (moved to part-time Oct. 2023)
- 7.2.1.2 Blake Williams – IT Specialist (Oct., 2023)
- 7.2.1.3 Shelia Ellis – Dept. of Coastal Studies Business Services Coordinator (retired Dec. 1, 2023)
- 7.2.1.4 Bob May - IT Specialist (Jan. 2024)
- 7.2.1.5 Nancy Rundhammer – CSI Asst. Director of Research & Administration (Feb. 2024)
- 7.2.1.6 Nicole Adkins – Dive& Water safety/ICS - Administrative Support Associate (March, 2024)
- 7.2.2 Positions Filled:
- 7.2.2.1 Dr. Qubin Qin - Assistant Professor – Ecological Modeling – Aug. 2023
- 7.2.2.2 Bob May - IT Specialist - Dec. 2023
- 7.2.2.3 James Simmons- Horticultural Specialist – Jan, 2024
- 7.2.2.4 Carol Myles - Environmental Building Technician – Feb, 2024
- 7.2.2.5 Laura Jolly - Dept. of Coastal Studies Business Services Coordinator - Feb., 2024

7.2.2.6 Robert McClendon – Post-Award Support (part-time) – March 2024

7.2.3 Ongoing Searches:

7.2.3.1 AMEC Program Manager (starts May 1)

7.2.3.2 IT specialist (negotiations)

7.2.3.3 Post-Award and Budget Specialist (advertising)

7.2.3.4 Administrative Support Associate – DCS (advertising)

7.2.3.5 Multiple summer internships and research technicians

7.2.4 Near-term changes:

7.2.4.1 Hiring Program manager for Ocean Energy Program, focused on deployment efforts for Atlantic Marine Energy Center

7.2.4.2 Modified the Asst. Director of Research & Administration position (previously held by Nancy Rundhammer) to a Post Award and Budget Specialist

7.2.4.3 Request to hire Research Assistant Professor, fully funded from grants and indirect funds

7.2.4.4 Evaluating the restructuring of business office personnel across all Integrated Coastal Programs, including CSI, to provide overlap in duties as needed and greater structure across ICP

7.3 RESEARCH TRENDS. FY'24 has seen a significant drop in new awards. This is due to the \$3.5 million from DoE for AMEC development that has not yet been delivered. It creates a significant challenge to operations when funds that have been budgeted for are held up this long. Aspirational goal has been ~\$3-5 million in new external research dollars per year.

**8 ECU FOUNDATION.** ECU Board of Trustees will meet at CSI on August 1<sup>st</sup>, will be a fantastic opportunity for ECU leadership to see full array of what CSI is capable of now and could be capable of in the future with continued financial support. ICP received \$14,570 from 30 different donors during the annual Pirate Nation Gives fundraising campaign in March.

**9 OTHER BUSINESS.** President Biden's recent 2025 budget proposal slashed the funding allocated for the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) by 76%, which would effectively shut down coastal and ocean observing efforts. The decision has been put on hold for now but will have real and lasting effects to CSI, North Carolina, and beyond.

9.1 CHANGE IN BOD. After many years of service on the Coastal Studies Institute Board of Directors we say thank you and goodbye to Mr. Orion Rolf Blizzard, Mr. Malcolm Fearing, Mr. Steve Keen, and Mr. S. Paul O'Neal.

**10 Adjourn 12:02 PM**