



FELLOW NEWS

News for and about the NOAA Fellows

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October 2009, Issue 43



FOCUS ON FELLOWS: Gabrielle Lyons



CLASS OF
2008-2010

The deep blue ocean—Coastal Fellow Gabrielle Lyons has been nurtured and inspired by it. Vivid cerulean waters frame Gabrielle’s earliest childhood memories in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, where she played in the ocean waters surrounding this southernmost Caribbean state. “I was a competitive swimmer and sailor, and my father works as a marine manager for a natural gas company, so the ocean was always a part of my life,” says Gabrielle.

Perhaps it should not be surprising that Gabrielle decided, after one semester spent in a chilly and landlocked terrain, that the College of St. Benedict in central Minnesota was not for her. She transferred to Hampton University in southeastern Virginia, enjoying a milder climate while completing her minor in biology and B.S. in marine and environmental science.

Dr. Diedre Gibson, an assistant professor of marine and environmental science at Hampton University, became an important mentor to Gabrielle. “I was inspired by the fact that she is a marine biologist and a woman with a Ph.D. who climbed the academic ladder, and I learned a lot from her,” emphasizes Gabrielle.

While finishing up her undergraduate degree, Gabrielle received a research internship at the University of South Carolina through the Diversity in Research in Environmental and Marine Sciences (DREAMS) program, a partnership involving Hampton University and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. This internship convinced Gabrielle that she wanted to continue her education at the University of South Carolina as an M.S. candidate in geological science with a concentration in marine geochemistry.

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In graduate school, Gabrielle found another important mentor. “My academic advisor at the time, Dr. Claudia Benitez-Nelson, is renowned in the field of oceanography, plus she is a woman, a minority, and a genius—I wanted to follow in her footsteps,” says Gabrielle. “What do I admire so much about her? She has a lot of energy, she’s passionate, and she’s fearless—there’s no stopping her. As an advisor, she always encouraged me to try new things and to be open to opportunities.”

One of those opportunities, says Gabrielle, involved working as a “grunt,” assisting with research equipment and data collection during an ocean cruise off the west coast of Canada. “Dr. Benitez-Nelson was researching phosphorus and nitrogen cycling in the water column. I was cold during the cruise, but the views were very scenic and the experience was a great research opportunity,” Gabrielle adds.

As Gabrielle was finishing her graduate degree, she learned about the NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship and jumped at the opportunity. “My scientific background made me a good fellowship candidate, I think. For me, the fellowship is a great opportunity to explore a career in marine management.”

Placed with the Delaware Coastal Management Program



Gabrielle Lyons conducts water monitoring on Kitts Hummock, Delaware, for her fellowship project.

(DCMP), Gabrielle is helping the State of Delaware develop an adaptation plan for sea level rise. One component involves holding workshops where all kinds of stakeholders gather together to learn more about sea level rise and to share information. Such meetings will help Gabrielle and her colleagues gather the information and data needed to craft a well-defined adaptation planning strategy.

Gabrielle admits that she has learned much more than she had previously known about managing meetings and groups of diverse stakeholders. “I’ve also learned so much about sea level rise, things that I can apply at home, where some islands in the Caribbean are beginning to ‘drown’ because of it.”

Gabrielle is also working on a marsh vulnerability index, which enables her to dip into her

science and research background as she compiles data and information on marsh subsidence, sea level rise, and other factors that can threaten marsh viability.

Two mentors at DCMP—Susan Love, a planner, and David Carter, an environmental manager—have eased her learning curve. “Both of them have guided me and given me reading materials on the challenge of integrating science and policy,” says Gabrielle. “It’s an interesting field but not always easy! When I have problems, I can also turn to some tech-savvy people in my office, and they help me out.”

Where does Gabrielle imagine her career will take her once the fellowship ends in August 2010? She is open to a geographical change, she says, as long as her career involves the coast. “I love marine science, and I definitely want to stay in this field.” 

FOCUS ON THE CENTER

The NOAA Coastal Services Center has received high marks for a suite of courses that help coastal professionals broaden and refine their resource management skills. An external review team recently affirmed the excellence of training programs run by the Center. The review also praised the complementary partnership shown by the Center's national-level training program and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System's locally oriented training program. (View the report at www.nerrs.noaa.gov/pdf/CSC_CTP_ExternalRevReport.pdf.)

What's more, since the report, the Center has launched or updated several additional trainings described below:

CanVis Workshop Now Available via WebEx

In response to an increasing demand for CanVis visualization software training, the Center has developed a virtual version of its hands-on workshop. This easy-to-use tool created by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agroforestry Center has been expanded by the Center to include coastal objects such as docks, boats, and houses. CanVis workshops via WebEx build

capacity and communication among NOAA's constituents while cutting travel costs. View www.csc.noaa.gov/canvis/workshops.html.

New Course Teaches Meaningful Evaluation Skills

Accountability. Efficiency. Effectiveness. The Planning for Meaningful Evaluation course was developed to meet a growing need among coastal professionals for evaluation results that clearly demonstrate accountability and spur improvements in program effectiveness and efficiency. Course participants learn to make informed choices that create fundamentally sound evaluation plans. See www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/cls/evaluation.html.

Geospatial Technology Course Is Tailored to Coastal Resource Managers

Introductory courses in geographic information system (GIS) technology do not always address the learning approaches and coastal scenarios most helpful to the nation's coastal resource managers. The Introduction to Coastal GIS course educates coastal professionals in the use of ArcGIS desktop software through relevant, real-world examples and

data. Examples of exercises include the siting of marine protected areas, visualizing of coastal population growth, and analyzing of impacts to coastal habitats. Contact Cindy.Fowler@noaa.gov.

Planning for Climate Change Workshop Materials Available On-Line

Coastal resource managers are eager to learn more about effective strategies for climate adaptation planning. Course materials for Planning for Climate Change, a workshop developed by the National Estuarine Research Reserve System with grant assistance from the Center, are now on-line. Workshop materials include PowerPoint presentations, streaming video, and a guidebook. Coastal professionals can choose to follow the materials closely or customize the curriculum to address region-specific climate impacts and planning issues. See <http://nerrs.noaa.gov/Training/padillabay/project.html>. 

For more information on Center trainings, view www.csc.noaa.gov/training/.



Participatory Mapping



Economics



Survey Design and Delivery



Stakeholder Participation



Focus Groups

Understand the role that social science can play in your organization. Order these publications from Donna.Mccaskill@noaa.gov.

FOCUS ON THE COASTAL FELLOWSHIP: Call for State Proposals

All U.S. states and territories with federally approved coastal zone management programs are eligible to submit one project proposal to compete for selection as a 2010–2012 fellowship host state. Multiple state agencies or organizations with partnered implementation of a state's coastal management program are also eligible. States that currently host a first-year fellow are not eligible to apply for a second fellow. This year, five project proposals will be selected.

A six- to eight-page proposal in 12-point font must include these sections:

- + Background and Introduction
- + Goals and Objectives
- + Milestones and Outcomes
- + Project Description
- + Fellow Mentoring
- + Project Partners
- + Cost Share Description
- + Strategic Focus Area*

Proposals are due to the NOAA Coastal Services Center by close of business on Friday, October 23, 2009. One signed original must be received through the mail, e-mail, or fax on this date (not postmarked, but received). Proposals can be sent to

Coastal Management Fellowship Program
c/o Margaret VanderWilt
NOAA Coastal Services Center
2234 South Hobson Avenue
Charleston, SC 29405
csc.fellowships@noaa.gov
Fax: (843) 740-1224

To view examples of previously selected state proposals, visit the fellowship website at www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/fellows/stateprojects.html.

*Please note that the Strategic Focus Area category is revised slightly each year to reflect current NOAA Coastal Services Center priorities. Please visit the website at www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/fellows/projectsselection.html for specific guidance.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

OCTOBER

11 to 14: **Rally 2009: The National Land Conservation Conference**
Portland, Oregon
www.landtrustalliance.org/learning/rally/rally-2009

14 to 16: **American Shore and Beach Preservation Association National Coastal Conference**
St. Pete Beach, Florida
www.asbpa.org/conferences/conferences.htm

18 to 21: **Geological Society of America Annual Meeting**
Portland, Oregon
www.geosociety.org/meetings/2009/

22 to 23: **Hurricane Hugo 20th Anniversary Symposium on Building Safer Communities**
Charleston, South Carolina
www.atcouncil.org

26 to 29: **Oceans '09 Biloxi**
Biloxi, Mississippi
www.oceans09mteebiloxi.org

27 to 29: **2009 Headwaters to Oceans Conference**
Long Beach, California
www.coastalconference.org

NOVEMBER

1 to 5: **Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation 20th Biennial Conference**
Portland, Oregon
www.erf.org/cerf2009/

2 to 4: **8th Annual Ronald C. Baird Sea Grant Science Symposium**
Newport, Rhode Island
www.seagrants.gso.uri.edu/baird/2009/

16 to 18: **Brownfields 2009**
New Orleans, Louisiana
www.brownfieldsconference.org

For more information on upcoming events, please visit www.csc.noaa.gov/cms/conferences.html.

NOAA COASTAL SERVICES CENTER TRAINING

CanVis Workshop
October 21, 2009
November 18, 2009
December 9, 2009
Via WebEx

Coastal Community Planning and Development
December 9 to 10
Savannah, Georgia

December 15 to 16
Brunswick, Georgia

GIS Tools for Strategic Conservation Planning
October 27 to 30
Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Negotiating for Coastal Resources
October 20 to 21
Gloucester, Massachusetts

Public Issues and Conflict Management
October 7 to 8
Mount Vernon, Washington

October 14 to 15
Apalachicola, Florida

For more information on virtual and site-specific trainings, visit www.csc.noaa.gov/training/.

CREDITS AND INFORMATION

Fellow News is published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center to relay information about the fellowship program and provide a forum for information exchange among fellows, mentors, Sea Grant, and the Center.

Please send your questions and suggestions for future editions to csc.fellowships@noaa.gov

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The fellows presented their fellowship projects at the 2009 Coastal Zone Conference in Boston, Massachusetts. Pictured, left to right: Deborah Purce, Dan Robinson, Gabrielle Lyons, Matt Slagel, Tricia Bowie, Andy Lanier, Daniella Hirschfeld, Joel Johnson, and Matt Nixon.