

Environmental CHALLENGES of the 21st Century









2019 ANNUAL REPORT

HARNESSING THE **POWER OF SCIENCE** TO TRANSFORM THE WAY SOCIETY UNDERSTANDS AND MANAGES THE ENVIRONMENT

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science has led the way toward better management of Maryland's natural resources and the protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1925. From a network of laboratories located across the state, our scientists provide sound advice to help state and national leaders manage the environment and prepare future scientists to meet the global challenges of the 21st century.



We work across disciplines and in diverse settings—from the Appalachian Mountains to the Arctic—seeking solutions that improve people's lives and sustain the natural world.



As trusted scientific advisors, our faculty provide unbiased research to inform management decisions and public policy on pressing environmental issues in our communities and around the world.



Our renowned faculty train the next generation of environmental leaders as part of the University System of Maryland's nationally ranked graduate program in marine and environmental science.



Headquarters: Cambridge, Maryland Year founded: 1925 Faculty members: 70 Graduate students: 95 Research laboratories: 4

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

Thanks to your support, we have begun a significant transformation of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. We publicly launched our new Strategic Initiatives at the UMCES Environmental Summit at the end of 2018, and we've begun to take some

Dr. Peter Goodwin

meaningful strides in 2019. Many of the factors driving the Strategic Initiatives have become more critical in the past year.

The last decade was the warmest on record, and recent scientific findings demonstrate that in the past 2,000 years there have been no other similar warming or cooling periods that affect the entire planet. We have experienced 1° C temperature rise since 1970, as has been predicted by science and despite major positive steps taken by several countries. Much needs to be done to curb greenhouse gas emissions to limit global warming to a further 1.5° C and to prepare communities and the environment to adapt.

Our focus is on four critical environmental challenges in which we will be targeting our research investment and effort—maintaining sustainable landscapes and seascapes; building coastal resilience; creating healthy urban waterfronts; and accelerating the science of changing oceans and climate— and four areas in which we will work to strengthen our capacity and deepen our service to Maryland and to the nation. These include expanding and

strengthening our educational offerings, deepening our engagement with citizens and decision-makers, contributing to a more diverse workforce in the field of environmental science, and contributing to Maryland's innovation economy.

We expect that clearly articulating and pursuing these priority commitments will strengthen collaborative work across the University, elevate and sharpen our public profile, and ultimately improve our ability to secure expanded support for the great work we do. Over the last year, we have spent time sharing our Strategic Initiatives with various constituencies. Their feedback convinces us that we are on the right track, and there is no time to lose.

The UMCES contribution to these major challenges is possible due to the preeminence of our faculty and students who are pursuing the broad range of fundamental research, from genes to ecosystems, that can be integrated to address the complex questions posed in the Strategic Initiatives. Through this interdisciplinary research, we are training an increasingly diverse set of excellent students to pursue these existential issues as the next generation of environmental scientists; we are informing and advising decision-makers to help them effectively navigate the most important environmental challenges; and we are educating and inspiring citizens so that they can and will hold themselves and others to high standards of environmental stewardship.

We are very proud of the work that we have accomplished, but also recognize that there is more to do—indeed, more that we must do—to help meet the profound environmental challenges facing our state, our nation, and the world. Thank you for your continued support to help us build on our legacy of actionable science and influential alumni.

Regards,

Dr. Peter Goodwin President

MISSION: The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science has a unique statutory mandate to conduct a comprehensive scientific program and apply predictive ecology for the improvement and preservation of Maryland's physical environment. This mission is accomplished through research, education, and public service.

TACKLING PRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science faculty work across disciplines and in diverse settings—from the Appalachian Mountains to the Arctic, and from fisheries to climate change—to understand and discover solutions to challenges in the Chesapeake Bay and around the world. As trusted advisors to state and national leaders, we provide the scientific basis to address pressing environmental issues in our communities and around the globe.

We've recently identified four critical challenges in which we will be focusing our research investment and effort in the coming years:

BUILDING COASTAL RESILIENCE



UMCES scientists provide modeling for local governments to plan for flooding and impacts of sea-level rise to coastal communities.

Coastal resilience is the ability of coastal communities and coastal ecosystems to adapt to external disturbances such as hurricanes, flooding and coastal inundation, and extreme heat and precipitation events. Adaptation can reduce the net cost of climate change and its associated consequences, such as sea-level rise and extreme weather events. Leading research on green restoration activities can help increase the protection of shorelines and coastal communities while maintaining ecosystem services.

OYSTER BREAKWATERS: Scientists are building an oyster breakwater to understand how these manmade structures, working in partnership with nature, could help stabilize shorelines around Chesapeake Bay as the threat of shoreline erosion and property loss is increasing.

SEA-LEVEL RISE: An UMCES-led group of scientists provides sea-level rise projections every five years (expected to range from 0.8 to 1.6 feet from 2000 and 2050) to aid managers in planning for changes to Maryland's 3,000+ miles of coastline. Scientists are developing new high-resolution models to predict the effects of storms and sea-level rise on Maryland's coastal communities.

MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPES AND SEASCAPES



State-of-the-art advances at the oyster cultivation facility have led to record-breaking numbers of spat-on-shell being used to help restore the Bay ecosystem and aid in aquaculture efforts.

The iconic Chesapeake Bay and its multi-state watershed and airshed provide a living laboratory for UMCES scientists to understand water- and land-use. Improved management practices offer opportunities to meet ambitious goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve soil health, and improve water quality in Maryland and beyond.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE: UMCES

scientists are leading an international effort to develop a sustainable agriculture matrix, a collection of indicators measuring nutrient use and agricultural practices from environmental, social, and economic dimensions on a national scale to help guide evolving international policies.

OYSTERS FOR RESTORATION: UMCES' oyster

expertise maintains a vital role in improving the management of the Bay's iconic species, the Eastern oyster. Recently scientists led the first oyster stock assessment in 135 years to help natural resource managers form a plan for oyster restoration in Chesapeake Bay, and state-of-the-art advances at the oyster cultivation facility at Horn Point Laboratory have led to record-breaking numbers of oysters produced to help restore the Bay ecosystem, aid in aquaculture efforts, and support the wild fishery.

ACCELERATING THE SCIENCE OF CHANGING OCEANS AND CLIMATE



UMCES oceanographers and fisheries scientists are at the forefront of what is one of the most globally integrated and interdisciplinary scientific fields.

The oceans are an important driver of climate. Already the impacts of sea-level rise, ocean acidification, extreme weather events, and declining oxygen levels are evident. UMCES oceanographers and fisheries scientists are at the forefront of a global effort to resolve and ultimately safeguard the impacts of a changing climate on our global ocean.

OCEANS LOSING OXYGEN: UMCES experts authored chapters on ocean deoxygenation and its significance for estuarine and coastal plankton, the basis of marine ecosystem's food web, and fisheries in a ground-breaking new report by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) that explores the causes and consequences of ocean deoxygenation and how we, as a planet, must react.

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS: Researchers have been working on developing a new model to better predict the long-term occurrences of dangerous and costly harmful algal blooms in the Chesapeake Bay and have joined a six-institution team to investigate how climate change and extreme precipitation events exacerbate harmful algal blooms, such as red tide, in the eastern Gulf of Mexico.

CHESAPEAKE DOLPHINWATCH: Using "citizen scientists," over than 5,000 users have signed up to help researchers track dolphins in Chesapeake Bay. More than 2,000 sightings were reported since 2017, and scientists are beginning to link dolphin movement to the temperature, salinity, and oxygen in the water.

FUTURE URBAN CLIMATES: This interactive web app reveals how 540 urban areas will feel in 60 years and has helped more than half a billion people visualize the impact of climate change on their lives. UMCES and National Geographic have partnered to expand the app to cities globally.

CREATING HEALTHY URBAN WATERFRONTS



Urban waterfronts like Baltimore's Inner Harbor are particularly vulnerable to intensified coastal development, storms, and flooding.

Urbanized and industrial waterfronts must prepare for and adapt to environmental and climate changes to ensure their ecological, environmental, and economic sustainability. UMCES research can help understand how to improve ecosystem function and biological biodiversity while increasing resilience to coastal inundation due to sea-level rise and storm surge.

HARBOR HEALTH: Scientists are using DNA barcoding to understand and identify what is living in urban waterways, such as Baltimore's Inner Harbor, to be able to have a baseline to judge ecosystem health.

GREEN HARBORS: UMCES brings together expertise to address green ship issues in the Chesapeake Bay and around the world, including vessel biofouling, alternative fuels, and methods to reduce air emissions, and is dedicated to developing effective and reliable sensors and platforms for monitoring water quality.

CORE RESEARCH AREAS

Biodiversity & Invasive Species Climate & Energy Coastal & Estuarine Science Environmental Chemistry & Toxicology Fisheries & Aquaculture Genes & Microbes Ocean Science Restoring & Sustaining Ecosystems Terrestrial Ecology & Land Management Water Resources & Watersheds

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

UMCES seeks to strengthen our capacity and deepen our service to Maryland and to the nation in the following areas:



LOCAL AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT TO IMPROVE DECISION-MAKING

UMCES provides the science for policymakers to address the pressing environmental issues in our communities.

Over the years UMCES has become an indispensable component of the policy-making process for Chesapeake Bay restoration, improving decision-makers' understanding of the challenges and potential solutions before them.



As awareness and the urgency of the climate crisis has grown, so has our role in helping Maryland identify, develop, and employ measures to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and our vulnerability to climate impacts.

UMCES helps provide the scientific foundation behind the statewide effort to track and communicate the Bay's heath and restoration. Our annual **Bay Health Report Card** serves as the primary scientific communications tool for reaching watershed residents about the health of their local waters.

UMCES scientists recently completed a study to understand the potential impacts of nutrient pollution associated with sediment transported from behind **Conowingo Dam** to the Chesapeake Bay. This synthesis is important for bringing the best science to Bay management decisions by considering the entire Susquehanna-Conowingo-upper Bay system.

UMCES had the unique opportunity to host and facilitate a public forum on the **climate crisis** featuring participants from a European Union delegation to Maryland. The European Union Member State Ambassadors from France, Portugal, Sweden, and Spain shared climate policies that their countries are implementing and opened lines of communication about potential collaborative projects in the future.



BUILDING A DIVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE PIPELINE

UMCES strives to be an exemplar of environmental science professionals reflecting the face of the communities served by our work.

UMCES and Maryland Sea Grant College have been awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to help grow the number and diversity of students who are interested in education and careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. This grant is part of a \$10 million, eight-institution **SEAS Islands Alliance** that will engage underrepresented minority students from the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam in marine and environmental sciences. The funded work will help to illuminate a full career pathway from middle school to graduate school and job placement.



PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

UMCES' research and researchers have the capacity and the opportunity to make significant contributions to Maryland's innovation economy.

Through the **Ratcliffe Environmental Entrepreneurs Fellowship**, local business leaders train students to be science entrepreneurs. Recent graduate Suzan Sharestani has completed seed funding for her startup Minnowtech, an aquaculture technology company that helps shrimp farmers around the world determine the number and size of the shrimp they can harvest from ponds with low visibility, thanks in part to investments by the University System of Maryland's Momentum Fund.



TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH EDUCATION

UMCES offers research-based graduate programs, internships for undergraduates, outreach for K-12 students and teachers, and informal learning programs for the public.

UMCES scientists train and inspire the nation's **next** generation of environmental leaders as part of the University System of Maryland's nationally ranked graduate program in marine and environmental science. Graduates conduct research at major universities, manage natural resources in public agencies, and drive entrepreneurial innovation in the private sector.

Four of our graduate students received highly prestigious John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship enabling them to apply their expertise to policy issues in the executive and legislative branches of the federal government.

Wave of Plastic, the NOAA-sponsored education partnership at Chesapeake Biological Laboratory will help Southern Maryland students understand the connections between actions on land, plastic pollution in local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay, and student environmental stewardship.

The annual **summer undergraduate internship** at the Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology celebrated its 17th year supporting increased diversity in STEM fields. Each summer, IMET offers undergraduates the opportunity to conduct a nine-week project research in marine sciences applying molecular tools.

Public outreach of UMCES' campuses across the state has brought science of the environment to more than 23,000 people through lectures with faculty experts, campus tours, special events and open houses and local K-12 programs.

2019 FINANCIALS

SOURCES OF EXPENDITURES

State Appropriations: \$22.8M (45%)
Grants: \$23.6M (47%)
Other: \$3.8M (8%)
\$50.2 million

SOURCES OF GRANTS

Federal: \$15.7M (75%)
State: \$3.2M (15%)
Private: \$2.1M (10%)
\$21 million

SOURCES OF FEDERAL GRANTS



- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): \$7.4M (47%)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): \$3.2M (20%)
- National Science Foundation (NSF): \$1.2M (8%)

□ NASA: \$1.2M (8%)

Other: \$2.7M (17%)

\$15.7 million



CONTRIBUTORS

UMCES' work is made possible by the generosity of our donors. Thank you.

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The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's sixth annual Commencement ceremony featured Professor Vicki Arroyo, Executive Director of the Georgetown Climate Center and Assistant Dean for Centers and Institutes at the Georgetown University Law Center. "For major environmental challenges saving Chesapeake Bay, curbing or preparing for climate change, individual institutions (even relatively small ones like UMCES and Georgetown Climate Center)—can play a vital role. And individual people like each of you graduating today can make a difference."

