



# The University of North Carolina

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December 19, 2001

## MEMORANDUM

To: Committee on Educational Planning, Policies and Programs

From: Molly Corbett Broad *Molly Corbett Broad*

Subject: Establishment of the UNC Coastal Studies Institute

### Request to Establish

In January 2001, the University of North Carolina Office of the President received authorization to plan the UNC Coastal Studies Institute. The planning is now complete, and UNC-OP has submitted a request to establish this unit as an interinstitutional research center. The following sections briefly summarize the information provided by UNC-OP to satisfy the requirements of *Administrative Memorandum #373*.

### Goals and Objectives

Northeastern North Carolina encompasses a complex of ecosystems unique in their natural resources, characteristics, and importance to the state and the nation. The nature and importance of these ecosystems necessitate sustained, broad, and in-depth consideration of issues such as water quality, fisheries, land and water habitats, tourism and leisure activities, and the legacy of human interaction with the natural environment. To date, however, the University has not carried out a coordinated approach to research, educational, or outreach programs in the northeast region. This limited University activity stems almost entirely from the absence of a facility in the region appropriately equipped for such programs.

The mission of the UNC Coastal Studies Institute is to undertake research, offer educational opportunities, and provide community outreach programs that embrace the unique history, culture, and environment of the maritime counties of northeastern North Carolina. The institute's research program will focus on the following four areas: (1) maritime history and nautical archaeology, (2) coastal processes, (3) estuarine ecology, and (4) tourism and coastal resources management. Located on Roanoke Island, the institute will provide a valuable and unique setting in which to conduct research in these areas. The institute will also

develop instructional and outreach activities to meet the needs and interests of a broad array of groups in the northeast. Such groups include University students, K through 12 students, retirees, tourists, and managers and other agency personnel who require scientific/technical information and assistance with important public policy or management issues. As noted above, the lack of an appropriately equipped facility in northeastern North Carolina has limited the University's ability to offer programs of this type in the region.

#### **Relevance to Institutional Mission; Relationship with Existing Academic Units**

The institute will collaborate with and enhance other marine science programs and units in the state. For example, five UNC institutions (ECSU, ECU, NCSU, UNC-CH, UNCW) have extensive on-campus programs in marine sciences, and four have institutional research centers or institutes, as follows:

- Institute for Coastal and Marine Resources, ECU
- Center for Marine Sciences and Technology, NCSU
- Institute of Marine Sciences, UNC-CH
- Center for Marine Science Research, UNCW

The proposed institute will not, however, duplicate the primary physical and biological science focus of these other UNC units. Rather, the institute will serve as a staging area and supporting laboratory to improve statewide research and outreach efforts in diverse areas such as environmental monitoring, coastal processes, estuarine ecology, and fisheries management. An institute in the northeastern region of the state will provide a unique opportunity for North Carolina universities collectively to develop a greater niche in North Carolina coastal research. Moreover, the institute will augment and enhance each of the existing University programs in the state by promoting their individual research efforts, providing a venue for promoting interinstitutional cooperation, and developing a new opportunity to produce a national resource for coastal-related education.

#### **Anticipated Effects on Instructional Programs**

The institute's instructional programs will offer both undergraduate and graduate courses, taught by faculty-in-residence and via distance learning facilities. Its facilities will include adequate space (e.g., classrooms, teaching labs, seminar rooms) and equipment (e.g., computers, distance learning facilities) to support its instructional programs.

#### **Administrative Structure**

A national search will be conducted for a permanent Director of the institute as recurring funds become available. Initially an interim Director, supported by one-time funds, will be appointed by the University President. The Director will report to the

University President. A Board of Directors, composed of leaders from academia, government, industry, and the coastal region, will provide oversight of the institute's operations and facilitate contacts between the institute and stakeholder groups. A Science Advisory Committee, composed of distinguished research scientists from academia, government, and the private sector, will provide valuable guidance on research topics, methods, and opportunities.

**Budget, Anticipated Sources of Funding, Space and Capital Needs**

The institute's initial budget will be funded through a combination of state funds, foundation funds, and contracts and grants. Funds to cover institute programs will come from major facility/program grants secured by the Director or by research grants obtained by researchers; funds to cover supplemental programs will come from student/participant fees. The center's Director will seek funding from all of these entities. Funds to cover facilities and programs were requested in the UNC expansion budget request approved by the UNC Board of Governors in November 2000, and are expected to be a part of future requests. While initial work can be done by the interim Director and the participating institutions, the University will continue to seek permanent state support for the institute to become fully operational.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that UNC-OP be authorized to establish the UNC Coastal Studies Institute.