



National Association of Marine Laboratories¹

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Attn: Education.Plan@noaa.gov

Subject: Education Plan Public Comment

NOAA Education Council
NOAA Office of Education
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

To the NOAA Education Council:

The National Association of Marine Laboratories (NAML) very much appreciates the opportunity to review the new *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Education Strategic Plan 2015-2035: Advancing NOAA's Mission through Education*. We are pleased to provide the following comments, a copy of which is also attached as a pdf copy.

The plan clearly addresses how and convincingly justifies why NOAA invests in education to expand the public's understanding and stewardship of Earth systems – in accord with the America COMPETES legislation of 2010. The vision is to have an informed society that uses ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, weather, and climate science to make the best social, economic, and environmental decisions. NOAA's strategy to work across the agency while seeking significant input on education from external partners will be a productive structure to follow. This strategy has proven productive, as demonstrated by NOAA's existing research collaborations with academic institutions, such as the National Sea Grant Program, cooperative institutes, the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, and multiple NOS extramural funding opportunities.

NAML, in its current and continuing Public Policy Agendas, strongly supports recommendations made to the NOAA Science Advisory Board that calls for continuing strong support for NOAA extramural programs. This recommendation extends to the extramural education community as well given its ability to incorporate NOAA-funded science results into educational programs that support NOAA's mission.

The Role of Marine Laboratories in the Nation's Education Enterprise

NAML's marine laboratories, distributed along the U.S. oceans, coastal and Great Lakes systems, form a unique complex of place-based "windows to the sea." They connect research communities with cutting edge marine, coastal and social sciences, while also providing students and citizens with meaningful learning experiences. The members of NAML work together to improve the quality and relevance of ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research, education and outreach. In particular, NAML laboratories serve a unique role in

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The National Association of Marine Laboratories (NAML) is a nonprofit organization of over 120 member Institutions representing coastal, marine, and Great Lakes laboratories in every coastal U.S. state and Puerto Rico and Bermuda. Members serve as unique "windows on the sea," providing information on the rich environmental mosaic of coastal and oceanic habitats. NAML member laboratories conduct research and provide a variety of academic, education, and public service programs to enable local and regional communities to better understand and manage the ocean, coastal, and Great Lake environments. NAML is comprised of three regional associations: the Northeastern Association of Marine and Great Lakes Laboratories (NEAMGLL), the Southern Association of Marine Laboratories (SAML), and the Western Association of Marine Laboratories (WAML)

conducting education, outreach and public service within the environs in which they are located. Their researchers and educators encourage the wise use and conservation of marine and coastal habitats and resources using ecosystem-based management approaches. NAML laboratories and their education staff members focus many of their programs on the education and training of the future scientific and technical workforce. They also play a major role in increasing the public's literacy of the oceans, coasts and the Great Lakes with an ultimate goal of promoting greater environmental stewardship.

NAML finds it to be critically important that we improve ocean literacy and workforce development among all sectors of our nation. Marine laboratories play an important role in formal and informal education and workforce development by providing students with a place to learn. Marine laboratories serve as primary training grounds for experiential ocean education and are committed to enhancing diversity within the field of ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research and education. By fostering relationships with community colleges and minority-serving institutions, marine laboratories provide distinctive learning opportunities for underrepresented groups, allowing students to achieve a greater understanding of oceans and coastal ecosystems and providing them with a sense of stewardship.

The unique and important aspects of marine laboratories are illustrated and heralded by two recent important reports from the National Research Council. They are: *Sea Change: 2015-2025 Decadal Survey of Ocean Sciences (DSOS)*; and *Enhancing the Value and Sustainability of Field Stations and Marine Laboratories in the 21st Century*.

Engagement

NAML laboratories are well-positioned to help NOAA meet many of its education objectives, in particular:

- ❖ Creating opportunities for individuals to become involved in NOAA research through citizen science, place-based education, hands-on experimentation, and training,
- ❖ Supporting the development of literacy frameworks that outline the fundamental concepts of Earth system science,
- ❖ Interfacing with and engaging Minority Serving Institutions,
- ❖ Providing professional development opportunities for educators, and supporting educator networks, and.
- ❖ Training the next generation of scientists and managers to recharge NOAA's workforce

We look forward to the continuing emphasis by NOAA in extending its science mission through effective education programs, and are prepared to join in these efforts.

Sincerely,



Nancy Rabalais
President