



## Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, May 13, 2021, 3:00 PM

Location: CSI Room 262, Virtual via ZOOM

### **Participants:**

**CSI Board Members:** Mr. Rolf Blizzard (Chair), Mr. Malcom Fearing, Mr. Paul O'Neal, Mr. Steven Keen, Mr. James Rispoli, Dr. Walter Holton, Dr. Jack Bagwell, Dr. Kirk Havens, Mr. Michael Kelly, CSI Representative (ECU Foundation representative)

**CSI Board Ex-Officio Members:** Dr. Reide Corbett, Dr. Michael Van Scott, Mr. Wally Overman, Dr. Kuldeep Rawat, Dr. Harvey Seim

### **CSI Board Members Not Participating:**

Dr. Chris Finelli, Dr. Grant Hayes, Dr. Ron Mitchelson, Dr. Margery Overton, Dr. Kimberly van Noort

**CSI Staff:** Mr. George Bonner, Mr. John McCord, Mr. Corey Adams, Miss Parker Kellam, Ms. Shelly Carpenter

**Guests:** Captain Keith Wheeler, USN, Retired, Executive Director of the Office of National Security and Industry Initiatives, Division of Research, Economic Development and Engagement, ECU

### *Convene:*

Mr. Rolf Blizzard, Chair, welcomed everyone. Introductions were made around the room.

Mr. Blizzard requested approval of the minutes from the June 19, 2020 meeting. Motion to approve minutes was made by Mr. Malcolm Fearing and seconded by Mr. Wally Overman. All were in favor. Minutes were approved. Mr. Blizzard invited Dr. Reide Corbett to present his Director's report.

### *Director's Report:*

Dr. Reide Corbett started by welcoming three additional members to the board, Dr. Kirk Havens, Dr. Walter Holton, and Dr. Jack Bagwell. The addition of the three made a full board for the first time in a few years.

**Academic Programs:** The UNC Outer Banks Field Site hosted 10 students from Chapel Hill in Fall 2020 and set the stage for face-to-face instruction during COVID. The semester brought new options for learning with outdoor classroom and instruction.

In Spring 2021, the ECU Semester Experience at the Coast brought 16 students from Greenville to the Outer Banks for five different face-to-face classes. Despite COVID safeguards, there were two positive cases among students which created challenges, but also offered some learning experiences. As ECU continues to plan for subsequent fall and spring semesters, the Outer Banks Campus will continue to follow ECU guidelines and parameters. Overall, the 2021 Semester Experience at the Coast was a great success.

The graduate population at CSI continues to grow. In 2018 the Coastal Resource Management Ph.D. Program transitioned to the Integrated Coastal Science Ph.D. (ICS). In 2020-2021, the ICS PhD program received nearly 30 applicants, of which over 10 were accepted and over five enrolled. The growth of the program is a result of the increasing amount of grant dollars that ICP has acquired to support Ph.D. students. Dr. Corbett is excited by recruitment metrics.

Dr. Havens asked how many faculty members and students lived locally.

Dr. Corbett stated he would address those questions later in his report.

Dr. Van Scott asked if there was any indication of where students were going if they did not accept admission to ECU.

Dr. Corbett stated he knew of some anecdotal cases in which those students sought larger, marine, oceanographic-focused institutions, such as WHOI and Scripps. Additionally, some students have gone into private industry.

Dr. Corbett continued with his report and stated that of the 28 students currently enrolled in the ICS Ph.D. program, approximately 40% of were fully supported through external dollars.

Student numbers on the Outer Banks Campus have more than doubled since 2016. During the 2020-2021 academic year, there were a total of almost 30 undergraduate students who spent a full semester on campus. While the growth is good, it will soon lead to housing issues which will need to be addressed soon.

**Research:** Dr. Corbett stated that despite COVID, there has still been exciting activity on campus and produced by faculty members. Dr. David Lagomasino published five papers on remote sensing and coastal management applications in the last 4-5 months. Dr. Jim Morley continued research focused on oyster leases as a potential artificial aquatic habitat source. Dr. Morley, Dr. Nadine Heck, and members of their labs are focused on better understanding North Carolina shrimp response to climate change and habitat degradation through analyzing historic data and

interviewing shrimpers. Finally, preparations for the Waves to Water competition continued with a successful test deployment in April 2021 with help from a significant team at CSI.

**Outreach & Engagement:** Dr. Corbett stated that COVID changed much of what CSI produces. With the help of the Outreach and Engagement team, the monthly live-streamed Meet the Scientist Series began. Meet the Scientist is a casual conversation between host Dr. Corbett and North Carolina coastal scientists. The platform has been used to engage the next generation of future scientists, as well as inform the public of current research happening at CSI.

Dr. Corbett stated in-person summer camps would resume in Summer 2021 after a hiatus in 2020. There will be four weeks of summer camp offered for children ages 10-15. The camps are almost completely booked. There had also been discussions of potential summer programming in partnership with Dare County Schools.

Dr. Corbett encouraged board members and guests to view the Kitchen Science series available on the CSI Youtube Channel. The one-minute videos introduce a scientific concept paired with a fun activity that can be completed at home.

Dr. Corbett stated that CSI hosted a virtual Blue Heron Bowl in February 2021. The event was a ocean science trivia competition for high school students. The winning team advanced to the national event hosted in May 2021. In 2021, the Blue Heron Bowl consisted of eight teams from around the state.

Dr. Corbett, in conjunction with Capt. Wheeler, has begun discussions with the North Carolina School of Science and Math to further engage high school students in program developed with more academic rigor.

Dr. Havens complimented the virtual Meet the Scientist series and suggested a way to continue it in person might be to take an approach similar to that of VIMS' A Scientist Walks Into A Bar monthly event.

**Advancement:** Dr. Corbett explained that advancement has been one of his top priorities and that large strides are being made. Dr. Corbett discussed marketing tactics and stated that despite the fact that giving had increased by an order of magnitude in the current fiscal year, there was still a long way to go. Dr. Corbett reported that the ECU Advancement is excited to work with us and is thrilled by our marketing efforts.

**Personnel:** Dr. Corbett highlighted growth and increased partnerships at CSI since 2016 by comparing the organization charts of 2016 and 2021. Dr. Corbett stated that he is both pleased and excited by the changes. In 2021, there were over 60 CSI personnel, up from just over 30 in 2016. Specifically, faculty members increased from three in 2016 to nine in 2021. Growth of other positions such as research associates and technicians, postdoctoral researchers, and graduate students at CSI can be contributed to expansion of faculty. Dr. Corbett stated that on any given day during a semester, there are between forty and fifty people on campus.

Mr. Blizzard referred to the organization chart and asked how many people shown on the on chart were in Greenville as opposed to the Outer Banks Campus.

Dr. Corbett stated there were about eight in Greenville.

Mr. Blizzard again referred to the chart and asked about the Coastal Maritime Council?

Dr. Corbett explained that the Coastal Maritime Counsel was an in-house advisory council that existed for many years to help guide coastal initiatives on main campus. It was an advisory board independent of Dr. Corbett's position. It disbanded when COVID became present and is currently being reworked to likely become more broad.

Dr. Corbett wished to acknowledge three people within Integrated Coastal Programs. Mr. Corey Adams received the ECU Centennial Award for Excellence. Dr. Lindsay Dubbs received the 2020 Clean Energy Education and Empowerment (C3E) Mid-Career Education Award for her leadership and efforts in the clean energy sector. Mr. Marco Agostini received an Undergraduate Research Creativity and Activity Award from the ECU Research division. Marco will continue his research at CSI in Summer 2021.

There were many changes in personnel in the last year. Jeff Gottermeyer, Housekeeper, retired in March 2020. Andy Keeler, Departments of Coastal Studies and Economics Professor, retired in January 2021. Kim Armstrong, CSI Administrative Support Associate, separated in February 2021. David Sybert, K-12 Coordinator, separated in February 2021. Terri Kerby-Hathaway, North Carolina Sea Grant, retired in February 2021. Robert McClendon, Assistant Director of Administration, retired May 2021. Jeff Lewis, Groundskeeper, will retire in June 2021. Tina Burris, Housekeeper, was hired in February 2021, and a new Groundskeeper will report May 24, 2021.

As of the meeting, there were three positions currently awaiting the approval of ECU HR due to changes in descriptions and duties. The Administrative Assistant, formerly Administrative Support Associate, will be elevated to include financial aspects and programmatic scheduling. The University Programs Associate, formerly the K-12 Coordinator, will be split between assisting the development of academic programs and working with the Engagement and Outreach team on K-12 programming.

Mr. Blizzard asked if any of the three positions would have a research component to job responsibilities.

Dr. Corbett answered they would now. He explained that the positions were administrative in nature, and though slightly different than those vacated, were not considered new positions.

Dr. Van Scott asked if CSI and Dr. Corbett had been able to utilize the Artificial Intelligence capabilities on main campus used for automatic email responses to some questions.

Dr. Corbett stated that he had not, but that it was something he had been wanting to look into.

Dr. Van Scott recommended Dr. Corbett contact Stephanie Whaley for assistance.

Dr. Corbett highlighted the third position, Assistant Director of Administration and Research, formerly the Assistant Director of Administration. The CSI research portfolio had grown significantly in the last few years, so this position will now include post-award management to help investigators manage their funding. The person who fulfills this position will continue with some of the old job duties but will now additionally assist with research award support. With these changes, Mr. Corey Adams duties will also transition, and he will provide increased support related to campus operations. Moving forward, Dr. Corbett expressed his hopes in initiating a new position to help Mr. Adams.

Mr. Blizzard inquired where these positions stood with HR approval.

Dr. Corbett stated that the Administrative Assistant position was currently being evaluated. The University Programs Associate had been approved and would be advertised within the next week, and the Assistant Director position had been sent to Academic Affairs for review the previous Friday. Dr. Corbett expected that each of the positions would at least be advertised by end of fiscal year.

Another board member asked if the Assistant Director would be responsible for any grant writing.

Dr. Corbett stated that while the person hired may be able to assist with that process, grant writing was not a specific requirement of the position.

Dr. Van Scott stated that there was also hope to hire a pre-award manager at some point too.

In addition to the three administrative positions discussed, Dr. Corbett stated there was also an ongoing faculty search for a Coastal Social Scientist. The search committee received over 90 applicants, sixteen of which were interviewed via video conferencing. Four finalists will interview in person and will visit both the main campus and the Outer Banks Campus. Dr. Corbett hoped the search would be finalized by the beginning of June 2021.

Mr. Blizzard asked what kind of social scientist was targeted for the hire.

Dr. Corbett stated that the search was broad in order to bring in applicants of many backgrounds including those of anthropology, economics, and geography. The big ask was that applicants used both quantitative and qualitative approach to their methods.

Mr. Fearing asked a question about housing for students and faculty.

Dr. Corbett stated he would cover the topic soon.

Mr. Fearing then asked what proportion of current faculty were researchers versus course instructors.

Dr. Corbett stated that faculty on this campus have a teaching responsibility though it is a lighter load than that of those on main campus. Faculty time not devoted to teaching is spent conducting research.

Mr. Fearing asked Dr. Corbett to elaborate.

Dr. Corbett stated that typical faculty at CSI differ from those on main campus. CSI faculty includes members from ECU, NC State, and UNC Chapel Hill. A typical faculty member on main campus teaches 4-8 classes per year. A research active faculty on main campus will usually teach approximately four classes per year. Faculty at CSI within the ECU Department of Coastal Studies only have a two-course teaching load for the year. So, that is reduced, but that is because the Outer Banks Campus is a research-focused institution. 75% of Outer Banks faculty time is spent doing research.

Mr. Blizzard asked about the biggest challenges for recruiting faculty.

Dr. Corbett stated the biggest challenge was finding someone interested in living on the Outer Banks. More specifically though, the challenge lies in who the faculty are able to recruit to work in their labs. Research Associates and Postdoctoral Researchers have found it hard to obtain housing. As a result, there are a few who have remained virtual. While that option remains open for now, it will be challenging to sustain a remote position in the long term.

Mr. Blizzard asked if the applicants to the Coastal Social Scientist position knew the job would be on the Outer Banks.

Dr. Corbett stated that it was explained in the application with resources provided for them to take a virtual tour of campus.

Mr. Keen expressed concerns for longevity of individual faculty presence at CSI, and he wondered if their research expertise would inevitably take them elsewhere.

Dr. Corbett stated it is always a risk that researchers could go elsewhere, and conveyed the importance of creating community so that faculty would want to stay. Dr. Corbett also acknowledged that there have not been any raises in several years which had led many faculty members, though not from CSI, to leave for other institutions. Dr. Corbett reiterated that he would do whatever he could to keep faculty satisfied. The two-course teaching load is an attractive benefit to faculty at the Outer Banks Campus.

Dr. Rawat asked about the expectations of faculty members in terms of research productivity.

Dr. Corbett stated the faculty on the Outer Banks Campus are expected to produce more research than those on main campus, but there is no hard line. It is hard to define across the organization because it is so interdisciplinary, but individual conversations do occur between Dr. Corbett and faculty members.

Dr. Rawat then asked how faculty time gets funded.

Dr. Corbett stated time funded by state dollars just as other faculty members. Some will then faculty buy out their time as they acquire additional funding.

Mr. Rispoli asked how CSI is different compared to others in the field. He gave being out in the field and conducting research at Jennette's Pier as examples.

Dr. Corbett stated that several researchers at CSI were field oriented, but that it wasn't so different from opportunities available to researchers at other facilities. In other words, field research was not what was really drawing faculty to CSI.

**Research Expertise:** Dr. Corbett highlighted the varying topics expertise among faculty at CSI. He wished to make the Board, as well as the community and State, aware of the expertise at CSI and within Integrated Coastal Programs. Dr. Corbett asked for the Board's help in making others aware and point people in the direction of CSI and ICP. The interdisciplinary expertise and support faculty could prove valuable especially when it comes to the state's climate resilience agenda. Faculty names, contact information, and areas of expertise were listed in a handout given to each board member.

Dr. Havens pointed out that VIMS had been written into Virginia state code to be of support for coastal issues. Dr. Corbett stated that he would like to see CSI similarly written into the code for North Carolina.

Mr. Keen inquired if CSI had anyone go to Raleigh to lobby for CSI.

Dr. Van Scott stated it should be discussed with the Chancellor as he would be making a trip to Raleigh soon.

Dr. Corbett stated that as a Dean and faculty he was not allowed to lobby but that the University could designate someone to do so.

Mr. Blizzard stated that the following day's visit of ECU and UNC System Leaders would be an excellent opportunity to develop contacts and have discussions about CSI priorities.

**Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Update:** Ten undergraduates will be on campus for eight weeks in Summer 2021. The program, Resilience and Adaptation to Coastal Change Across Virtual Communities, is ECU's first coastal-related REU and is funded by the National Science Foundation.

**North Carolina Renewable Ocean Energy Program:** Dr. Corbett invited Mr. George Bonner to give an update on the North Carolina Renewable Ocean Energy Program (NCROEP).

Mr. Bonner stated the NCROEP Symposium would take place virtually on May 24-25, 2021. NCROEP is excited about the continuation of the \$3.3 million Waves to Water Prize. One of the teams, Water Bros, is still in the running for the prize is a team from the program hailing from NC State and UNC-C. NCROEP and CSI have been selected as a regional partner for the Department of Energy's Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Program to assist remote and island communities further develop their energy resilience. Two of the eleven communities selected for the first round were Nags Head & Ocracoke. Mr. Bonner shared that NCROEP was also selected as part of a consortium to form the Atlantic Marine Energy Center. The \$10 million award is still being finalized but will likely kick off in July 2021. Finally, NCROEP is hosting intern Vega Sproul in Summer 2021. He will be funded through the North Carolina Rural Works Program. Sproul is a rising senior from NC State and a graduate of First Flight High School.

#### **Financial Report:**

Dr. Corbett discussed financial information provided on handouts. He first pointed out that there was a 15% reversion of the directly operating budget in November 2020 and did include NCROEP. It resulted in a return of approximately \$200,240 to Academic Affairs.

Mr. Blizzard asked if the reversion was a result of not spending it or due to a mandate.

Dr. Corbett stated the reversion was mandated by ECU. ECU was preparing for a potential reversion to the UNC Systems office. ECU did not end up with a reversion to the Systems office and instead put the money toward COVID-related needs.

Mr. Blizzard inquired about lapsed salary.

Dr. Corbett stated lapsed salary could not support operating budgets.

Mr. Blizzard inquired further, and Dr. Corbett reiterated the reversion came from the operating budget only, not from the total. Dr. Corbett stated it was a tough year for colleges across the board due to COVID but that things were moving forward.

Dr. Corbett stated that CSI was modeling a 6% entire budget cut in an effort to effectively manage resources should an actual cut need to be made. He hoped to have more information in the near future.

Dr. Van Scott explained that Integrated Coastal Programs actually took a smaller cut than some.

Related to Advancement, Dr. Corbett stated the acquisition of \$30,000 in advancement funds and thanked Mr. Michael Kelly for starting the Mike Kelly Fund.

Mr. Kelly explained the advantage of donor-advised funds and encouraged fellow board members to donate similarly if they wished to give.

Dr. Havens asked if growth of the account would occur through investment or just as donors added. After some discussion, it was clarified that the account could gather interest.

Dr. Havens then asked if CSI has established relationships with UNC Systems and UNC-Chapel Hill Advancement offices.

Dr. Corbett stated CSI currently did not, but some efforts had been discussed in the past.

Dr. Van Scott stated that specific visions, such as those for a dormitory, could be made more clear, it may be easier to acquire donations.

Dr. Corbett stated that a dorm was one of his top five priorities for the campus. He continued by highlighting the ECU Coastal Scholarship and the residual fund known as the UNC CSI Priority Fund.

Mr. Blizzard asked why the Keeler account was negative.

Dr. Corbett suspected it was because Dr. Keeler retired but stated he would need to check with Academic Affairs.

Dr. Corbett moved on to address Overhead and Continuing Education accounts. Overhead is growing as a product of research grants coming in. CSI receives 10% return of F&A Overhead. Continuing Education went down as a result of lost programs due to COVID. That will start to change as CSI hosts camps in Summer 2021. \$15,000 recently went into the account as a result of camper registrations.

Mr. Blizzard asked if Dr. Corbett could share more with the Board about Overhead receipts.

Dr. Corbett stated that any research award made to ECU will have a 51% overhead to further the research mission of the University. Of that 51%, CSI receives 10% and ICP gets 10%. Then, the faculty member's department might get 10% and the individual investigator will get 10%. The ECU Research division will hold on to somewhere between 40-70% of the award based on the faculty member and who is involved. The division distributes it to allow for research investments. The remaining 49% of the funded award will go directly toward the research project itself.

Dr. Van Scott gave another example to provide further clarification and highlight the benefits of the large overhead. He answered additional questions until all board members understood.

Mr. Blizzard commented that it was important moving forward to make sure the General Assembly protected Overhead receipts.

Dr. Corbett stated that along these same lines, there was approximately \$80,000 left in top funds, or those which were originally designated to build the CSI Building. The funds need to be used soon. CSI has identified the need for Boat Storage which could be paid for in part by the remaining \$80,000. Dr. Corbett stated the covering structure would likely cost over \$300,000. Therefore, Overhead dollars would be used to help make up the difference. Dr. Corbett said he was working with ECU through the process and that \$120,000-140,000 could be used from Overhead.

Dr. Corbett shifted attention to grant funding. Dr. Corbett stated there was roughly \$3,000,000 in active grants with more to come soon.

Mr. Fearing asked if CSI would receive any money from the federal governments Higher Education Relief Fund.

Dr. Corbett stated that ECU had received some funding but was skeptical that any would come directly to CSI.

Mr. Fearing asked if CSI had specifically made a request to receive funding.

Dr. Corbett stated that he had looked into it but that he did not see an opportunity to ask for direct funds for CSI.

Dr. Corbett displayed graphs and charts which were also included in the members' handouts, and he stated that trends of research proposals and received grants are up. During the 2021 fiscal year, CSI had submitted \$16 million worth of proposals and been awarded \$1.5 million. In comparison, only \$200,000-250,000 was received in 2016. Increased funding is directly related to faculty growth. Dr. Corbett was pleased with the current trajectory and the faculty's efforts, especially when compared to other ECU colleges, and he stated his goal was to reach \$3-5 million external dollars awarded per year in the near future. Dr. Corbett also stated that total research dollars among the center and its associates was approximately \$22 million last fiscal year.

### **Future Student Housing**

Dr. Corbett stated that a meeting had been held the previous Monday with the housing committee to discuss housing needs and updates in detail. Needs for housing include dorm-style for undergraduates and apartments for graduates and staff. Near-term housing opportunities include the Friends of Elizabeth II Guesthouse and the Morrison Grove Apartments. Dr. Corbett projected 15 beds will be needed in Fall 2021 and up to 35 beds by Spring 2024, but he said these projections were made based on Spring semesters during COVID.

Mr. Fearing, who serves on the housing committee, gave his notes from their meeting. He stated that the need for housing is critical to the organization and to the community. To

address this need from all angles, Mr. Fearing suggested a full calendar, conditions required, and estimated cost should be provided.

Mr. Wally Overman then explained the county's work with the UNC System Board of Governors to find housing solutions. A proposal exists at Bowsertown to build 72 units for workforce housing, and he wondered if a similar solution could be provided for students.

Dr. Havens asked if housing for students during the summer should be a possibility in order to provide opportunity for summer internships.

Dr. Corbett said that could be an identified need as in the past CSI has hosted summer interns.

Mr. Blizzard suggested the housing committee should next submit a recommendation to the CSI Board of Directors and other necessary leaders. He asked the housing committee to assist Dr. Corbett with the necessary preparations.

The housing conversation concluded, and Dr. Corbett reviewed the following day's agenda with the Board of Directors. Two "asks" identified for the following day centered around different aspects of growth.

Mr. Blizzard stated that two other matters should be discussed among the Board in the near future. The first was to fill the last vacant seat. The nominating committee named Mr. Mark Garner, and the Board was in favor of submitting his name for review to the Chancellor. The second item was to acknowledge Senator Marc Basnight's birthday and end with a moment of silence in his memory.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Parker Kellam