



Coastal Studies Institute Board of Directors
Spring Meeting: April 11, 2025, 10:00 – 12:00
Location: CSI Rm. 262 or Virtual via ZOOM

Minutes

Call to Order 10:00 am

1. Roll Call (Executive Director Corbett)
 - a. Voting members **present:** Jack Bagwell, Chris Buddo, David Clegg, Micah Daniels, Mark Garner, Kirk Havens, Mike Kelly, Cheryl Oliver, Andrea Poole, Rob Ross, and Stacy Rogers Ward. Voting members **absent:** Ken Halanych, Margery Overton, Kuldeep Rawat, Harvey Seim
 - b. Non-voting members present: Orion Rolf Blizzard, George Bonner, Reide Corbet, Sharon Paynter
 - c. A quorum was determined to exist. (*Chair Garner*)
2. Approve or Modify Agenda (*Chair Garner*). Motion to approve the agenda was made by Jack Bagwell and seconded by Cheryl Oliver. ALL APPROVED
3. Introduce New Board Member (*Chair Garner*). Welcome to Andrea Poole, the new Chief of Staff at UNC System office. Taking the place of Norma Houston who retired earlier this month.
4. Approval of Minutes (*Chair Garner*). Motion to approve the minutes from the last Board of Directors meeting, October 18, 2024, was made by David Clegg and seconded by Jack Bagwell. ALL APPROVED. Motion to approve the minutes from the special called Board of Directors meeting, March 21, 2025, was made by Kirk Havens and seconded by Jack Bagwell. ALL APPROVED.
5. Report of Officers (*Chair Garner*).
 - a. Thanks to Mike Kelly for hosting the social hour at his home last night; to Mike O'Driscoll for the field trip yesterday that gave Board members an opportunity to see what some of the scientists at CSI do, firsthand; and to Inner Banks Media and the Talk of the Town radio show for broadcasting from CSI this morning and exposing CSI to a wider array of people that might not otherwise have known about it.
 - b. UNC has approved ECU's new funding request for new student housing to be built on CSI campus. The request for funding will now go to the state legislature. Due to current political climate it may be tough to secure funding in the upcoming state budget, however, we have been advised that this capital project will remain ECU's number one new capital funding priority for at least two years.
6. Updates from CSI Campus Partners
 - a. ECSU – *Dean Kuldeep Rawat* (Unable to attend, no report provided.)

- b. NCSU – *Dr. Margery Overton* (Unable to attend, no report provided.)
- c. UNC-CH – *Dr. Harvey Seim* (Unable to attend, no report provided.)
- d. UNC-W – *Dr. Ken Halanych* (Unable to attend, no report provided.)
- e. ECU – *Interim Provost Chris Buddo*
 - i. On April 2, 2025, ECU celebrated its new status as a Carnegie R1 institution. This designation is based on the dollar amount dedicated to research spending and the number of research doctorates produced. CSI played a significant role in helping ECU achieve this status by consistently securing research grants from year to year.
 - ii. ECU’s other financial request for the UNC System is \$9.3 million for scholarships that will be donor matched and used to help recruiting efforts.
 - iii. Dr. Reide Corbett is currently undergoing his 5-year evaluation in his position as Dean of Integrated Coastal Programs. It is an important process that is meant to help our leaders continue to grow and improve in their professional development.
 - iv. There have been disruptions in federal funding. Some active grants have been rescinded, ordered to be returned by courts, and then rescinded again. It impacts millions of dollars and several jobs.
- f. UNC System Office – *Andrea Poole*
 - i. A recurring budget of \$30 million has been proposed to the state legislature for performance funding.
 - ii. A new initiative this year, flex tuition for military students, has also been proposed to the state legislature. Currently waiting on both these decisions.
 - iii. UNC Board of Governors, yesterday, approved new members to the ECU’s Board of Trustees.
 - iv. UNC President Hans has emphasized recently that efficiency will be a priority.

7. Executive Director’s Report (*Executive Director Corbett*)

- a. Recent impacts on CSI research.
 - i. \$3.7 million new dollars has been brought in by CSI/ICP so far this fiscal year, should be \$4 million by the end of the FY.
 - ii. One National Science Foundation (NSF) proposal was accepted in January, but there has been no further communication from NSF about when the funding (\$500,000), will arrive.
 - iii. The Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program held each summer at CSI is on pause this year. The REU renewal application was submitted in August 2024, however it is also funded through NSF and they have not made decisions yet as to which programs will be renewed. As an alternative, CSI will host 6-8 undergraduate interns independently over the summer.
 - iv. Two awards from USAID have been rescinded for a total of \$154,000, as a result of recent executive orders. These awards supported research and jobs at CSI that the institute is now trying to find a way to cover. The “Fish Right” program, which lost

\$134,000 when the award was rescinded, may come back under the State Department but, that is not guaranteed and there is no timeline at this time.

- v. Currently funded projects are being evaluated for trigger words that could cause them to come under scrutiny in the future. As an example, one of the words being used to identify funding that may be rescinded is diversity. It is challenging for anyone studying biodiversity to write a grant proposal without the word diversity but that is what they are currently having to do.
- b. Housing update. The one-year lease was only increased 2% this year as opposed to the 4% it has been every year past. We have 32 beds at Manteo Community Housing, the entire 2nd floor. The most we have had in the past was 26 students at one time and there were many complaints that the shared spaces, kitchen especially, were too small for that many people.
- c. Academic Programming.
 - i. Fall 2024 had 12 OBXFS students, 2 ECU students doing research with DCS faculty, and 4 local high school interns.
 - ii. Spring 2025. ECU's Semester Experience at the Coast had 44 students sign up for the Semester Experience at the Coast, 18 enrolled. 67% of our Spring cohort are participating in internships or independent research, 7 in the OBX community (NCCF, NCARI, Elizabethan Gardens, TNC, Dare County Emergency Management), and 5 at CSI.
 - iii. Summer 2025
 - 1. 13 ECU Engineering students will spend the summer here working with Dr. Ryan.
 - 2. 7 undergraduate students will participate in internships across CSI research labs, NCROEP, and the OBXFS Fellowship.
 - 3. ECU Honors College bringing 12 students to the OBX for 3 days in May, where they will participate in Education programs here at CSI.
 - 4. 9 Students from UNCSA will be visiting in May to present their program using several mediums to showcase coastal challenges.
 - 5. Coastal Community Environmental Data Scholars (CCEDS) National Research Traineeship (NRT) from ECU spending a week at CSI working to "solve" a coastal challenge.
 - 6. 1 local high school intern with CSI summer camps.
- d. NCROEP.
 - i. The annual symposium was held March 26-27, 90 people attended, and the keynote speakers were Matt Grosso, director of the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's Water Power Technologies Office (WPTO), and Samantha Quinn, Program Director for the Pacific Ocean Energy Trust (POET). New this year was the Wave Energy Converter (WEC) Workshop as part of the symposium. The

goal of the workshop was to show engineers and researchers the practical side of deploying a WEC in the water.

- ii. Manteo Middle School won this year's NC Renewable Energy Challenge at CSI. They then went on to win the regional competition and went to the state level, although they did not place there.
- iii. Partnering with University of New Hampshire to conduct an Introduction to Marine Energy short course this August. The goal is to host the course at CSI summer 2026.

e. Outreach & Engagement.

- i. The NC Renewable Energy Challenge has continued to grow from year to year. It serves as a great way to engage with the community.
- ii. There will be 9 weeks of summer camps again this year for students aged 10-15. New this summer will be a camp for students aged 13-17 that was developed to engage students as they begin thinking about college and careers after high school and keep them enthusiastic about marine and coastal science.
- iii. On April 17th the "Science on the Sound" program will be held at the Pioneer Theater. A showing of the documentary "The Cigarette Surfboard" followed by Q&A with the film creators. All free of charge and open to the public.
- iv. CSI Open House will be May 17th, 2025. 12:30 am – 4 pm.

8. Report of Budget (*Executive Director Corbett*)

- a. The goal is to diversify funding and not be as reliant on state funding.
- b. 91% of non-state funds come from federal grants, and most of that comes from the Department of Energy (DOE).

Discussion: Message from ECU is that all terminated grants will be handled consistently in terms of providing institutional funds to continue the work and research. Until a grant has been terminated work on it needs to continue as normal.

9. Committee Reports

a. Ad Hoc Nominations Committee (*Committee Chair Havens*).

- i. Mark Garner recommended for second full (4-year) term to the Board.
- ii. Due to the high turnover rate of Board members last year, it is recommended that no new members be added to the Board in 2025. Staggering when new members are appointed will help ensure that a large turnover like that does not happen again.
- iii. The bylaws updates states that Board members may serve for up to 4 years.
- iv. Malcolm Fearing, a former Board member, is recommended for emeritus status.

Discussion: Emeritus status is not and should not be automatic for all Board members. The loss of Mr. Fearing's institutional knowledge as well as community, regional and state relationships would be significant. For that reason in addition to his long and meritorious service, he was recommended for emeritus member status. In discussing the committee's recommendation, it was noted that emeritus status

should not prohibit someone from serving on the Board in the future as an appointed regular member. The only stipulation is that a member of the Board having served two full consecutive terms must sit off the Board for at least one year before being eligible for reappointment.

- v. David Clegg made a motion to adopt all the Nominations Committee's recommendations as a whole, seconded by Kirk Havens. ALL APPROVED. Recommendations will be forwarded to the ECU Chancellor for approval.
- b. Ad Hoc Advancement Committee (*Committee Chair/Exec. Dir. Corbett*).
 - i. No recommendation at this time. The purpose of this committee is to strategize ways to raise awareness and funds for the institution in order to further the work that CSI can do.
 - ii. The one-page flyers that were created for ICP and NCROEP showcase the reach of both programs. They can be used as talking points when engaging with the public and potential donors.
 - iii. CSI received 32 individual donations during Pirate Nation Gives for a total of just over \$17,000 despite only 40% of Board members participating. The first donation by a CSI alumni was received during the Pirate Nation Gives drive this year.

Discussion: CSI is a multi-institutional facility however, ECU is the only one responsible for fundraising. Many of the partner schools have their own marine research facilities for which they are responsible for fundraising. In the past there was a consortium of NC marine research facilities that brought the facilities together on a regular basis and helped enable collaboration and networking. Unfortunately, that consortium no longer exists. Hosting a symposium for NC marine research facilities at CSI could be a great opportunity for the advancement team to make new introductions with potential donors. Shannon Paynter and Reide Corbett will meet to discuss the possibility of a symposium in the future.

- c. Bylaws Governance Committee (*Chair Garner*).
 - i. Bylaws currently state that any change to the bylaws can be approved by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Directors, subject to the Chancellor's approval, and that any proposed changes be introduced at a meeting prior to the scheduled meeting of action. A special called meeting was held on March 21st 2025, to discuss the changes listed below.
 - ii. Eleven significant changes were recommended. **1.** Defined "Voting" versus "non-voting" Board member status. **2.** Redefined Board terms to be "no more than" four years, with eligibility for one consecutive re-appointment of "no more than" four years. This change was recommended by the Ad Hoc Nominations Committee to assist in preventing too many simultaneous "roll-offs" in the future, enhancing the opportunity to ensure continuity and consistency within the Board. **3.** Expanded the Conflict of Interest statement. **4.** Vice-Chair and Recording Secretary positions

were added as no seat other than Chair previously exists. **5.** Added that Officers shall be elected from among at-large members of the Board. **6.** Three standing committees were added where none exists prior: Nominations Committee, Advancement Committee, Programming & Engagement Committee. **7.** Redefined a quorum to be one-third of the voting membership of the Board. **8.** Added language concerning meeting attendance expectations by members. **9.** Deleted sections concerning the Executive Director as Committee members felt this was not pertinent to the Board governance document. **10.** Removed previous language relevant to UNC CSI Board's involvement in the appointment of the ECU Foundation representative. **11.** Added a severability clause.

- iii. Kirk Havens made a motion to approve the recommended changes to the Board of Directors bylaws, seconded by Cheryl Oliver. ALL APPROVED.
Recommendations will be forwarded to the ECU Chancellor for approval.

10. New Business (*Chair Garner*).

- a. Permanent name badges have been purchased for all Board members.
- b. Certificates of appreciation will be presented to all Board members as they step down from the Board. Certificates will be mailed to Paul O'Neill, Steve Keen, Malcom Fearing, and Orion Rolf Blizzard who all rolled of the Board last year.
- c. At the next meeting the Board will receive nominations for the new officer positions created by the new bylaws, if they are approved by the ECU Chancellor. Each officer will serve a one-year term, to align with the current term of the Board Chair. It is suggested that nominees be consulted before the official nomination.

11. Meeting adjourned at 11:49 PM.