



**Alignment memo:
Connecticut Sea Grant's contribution towards the UConn Academic Plan**

October 28, 2008

1. Background

Located at the Avery Point campus, the Connecticut Sea Grant College Program (CTSG) is a federal, state, and university partnership that engages in research, outreach and education activities related to coastal and marine issues. The vision of CTSG is to “*Foster sustainable use and conservation of coastal and marine resources for the benefit of the environment and current and future generations of residents of Connecticut and the region*”. This memo documents recent contributions of CTSG in support of, and highlights to what extent the CTSG Strategic Plan aligns with, the goals and strategies of the UConn Academic Plan. For reference, a copy of the executive summary of the CTSG Strategic Plan, *Blueprint for a Coastal Legacy: Connecticut Sea Grant Strategic Plan 2007-2011*, is attached, while the full document is available at www.seagrants.uconn.edu/blueprint.pdf. I also enclosed a copy of “The Year in Numbers”, a summary of the CTSG scholarly accomplishments for the last fiscal year, as reported to the National Sea Grant office.

2. Focus Areas of Excellence

CTSG directly contributes to two Focus Areas of Excellence: “The Environment”, via many of its programs, and “Health and Human Behavior”, via its safe seafood initiative. In addition, CTSG emphasizes interdisciplinary approaches in its research, outreach and education activities. CTSG is actively involved in the overall direction of the “marine enterprise” at the UConn Avery Point campus, coordinating and collaborating with the Department of Marine Sciences, the NOAA National Undersea Research Center, and the campus leadership.

CTSG’s strategic plan includes the following three thematic areas: (1) Marine Aquaculture and Biotechnology; (2) Use and Conservation of Marine Resources, Ecosystems and Habitats, with the sub-themes (2A) Coastal Land Use and Community Planning, (2B) Habitat Restoration and Enhancement, (2C) Aquatic Invasive Species, and (2D) Use and Conservation of Marine Resources; and (3) Marine and Aquatic Science Literacy. Progress in addressing these thematic areas is achieved by working in four functional areas: (1) Research, (2) Outreach (extension and

communications), (3) Education and (4) Administration. Each functional area has its own goals and strategies.

3. Interrelated areas

Goal 1: Undergraduate Education

CTSG's general contribution to undergraduate education falls under the theme, Marine and Aquatic Science Literacy. Last year, CTSG contributed to the education of 42 undergraduate students in six (6) courses. In addition, CTSG contributed to the improvement of K-12 science education, therefore supporting a stronger Connecticut future college cohort, by offering several professional development activities for educators over the course of last year. Fifty-seven (57) teachers, and in turn, nearly 4500 students, benefitted from these programs (Strategy A). CTSG has, and will continue to offer experiential and service learning by offering senior high school, undergraduate and graduate student internships in its different programs, in addition to partnering to provide teacher research experiences (Strategy D).

Goal 2: Graduate and Professional Education

CTSG's major contribution to graduate education is via its extra-mural research program, which is held every other year. Such research projects, selected on a highly competitive basis for their relevance to local and regional priorities and for the quality of the proposed research, supported 32 graduate students last year. Of these students, two (2) graduated with a MS and three (3) graduated with a PhD. CTSG also awards small "start-up" or development grants which often provide some support for graduate research projects. In addition, CTSG advertises and supports the selection of national fellowships such as the Knauss, Industry, and NMFS/Sea Grant fellowships, which often result in placement with top governmental agencies or industries. Overall, CTSG activities directly support Strategies A, B and C of the Academic Plan.

Goal 3: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities

As described above, CTSG supports an active extra-mural research program. Last year, three (3) research projects (two years each) were supported, totaling \$360,325 for the two years of the granting period. It is noteworthy that, with aggressive planning and program success, the research competition for the next reporting period will have supported five (5) projects for a total of over \$533,000 for the two-year projects. In addition, CTSG awards small-scale "start-up" funds to help initiate research projects; these projects often provide the proof of concept or preliminary data needed to apply for more substantial sources of funding. This program allocated \$32,100 to 22 projects in the last year. In addition, Sea Grant staff leveraged over \$1.67M in the last year in grants and contracts from federal, state and private sources to pursue scholarly research and outreach activities. Sea Grant activities resulted in 35 peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters last year. Overall, CTSG activities directly support Strategies A, B and C of the Academic Plan.

Goal 4: Diversity

CTSG offers a modest contribution to the Academic Plan’s objectives towards diversity via, for example, its educational activities that purposefully target the most underserved and underprivileged school systems in the state. Other specific activities include “Project Sea Urchin”, a program that enabled children from a shelter for victims of domestic violence to participate in hands-on learning activities on the Long Island Sound shore, as well as the translation and distribution of selected educational resources into Spanish.

Goal 5: Public Engagement

Through its education, extension and communications activities, CTSG interacts with stakeholder and citizen groups on a daily basis on behalf of the University, and the State and Federal governments, and all the programs and resources they have to offer. Such interactions are often referred to as “honest” and “impartial” exchanges that are free of oversight or regulatory principles that are associated with government representatives, with access to the breadth and depth of resources found in a university. In addition, CTSG documented active working relationships with 175 partners, including federal, state and local agencies, NGOs, industry, academic institutions, and international governmental and academic partners. CTSG sponsored or organized 45 workshops with 870 participants, and gave more than 80 public presentations to 694 people in the last year. Our education program directly contributes to the strengthening of the State’s K-12 education system via its various programs. Overall, CTSG activities directly support Strategies A, B, D and E of the Academic Plan.

4. Conclusion

While its various activities are directed and tracked by its own strategic plan, CTSG actively contributes to most of the goals (particularly goals 1, 2, 3 and 5), and within those goals, to most of the identified strategies, of the UConn Academic Plan. Because CTSG is neither a department nor confined within a college, it can interact with multiple departments and colleges, and thus can serve to promote interdisciplinary collaborations. While the implementation of the Academic Plan is via the traditional lines of departments and colleges, this memo is intended to remind the UConn administration of recent and ongoing activities performed within Connecticut Sea Grant, and their close alignment with the priorities stated in the Academic Plan. I would be delighted to engage in future conversations to enhance and build upon the common goals of the Academic Plan and the activities of CTSG.

Yours,



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