

I serve as the program manager for the
EPP Cooperative science centers
and EPP is the educational partnership program
and this is the EPP forum that we have every two years
this year's forum in 2014
marks the 7th such forum
hosted by the NOAA Living Marine Resources Cooperative Center
at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

I serve as the director of the
Living Marine Resources Cooperative Center
and it is a cooperative agreement with NOAA
we work with NOAA scientists
and the Living Marine Resources Cooperative Center
is actually a consortium of seven institutions with the
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
being the lead institution.
I have attended at least three other NOAA conferences
and I think this one has gone very well
and this one is also special in the sense that
we have more student focused development workshops
than we have had in the past.
So students have had an opportunity to interact
with professionals and participate in these workshops.

Today I'm involved with student concurrent sessions
So I'm looking at student development
and looking at resume building.
I chaired that session
with Dr. Ayeisha Brinson and Dr. Ebony Roper
and we're trying to provide feedback to students
on how to improve their professional
documents as they apply for jobs in the future.

"Set up an account even when you're not looking for a job yet,
so you can look through the job announcements
and sort of familiarize yourself with what these positions might require."
The whole program is really about focusing on students.
It's not necessarily about the scientific accomplishments,
but more about giving the students opportunities
and experiences in presenting and mingling with other
students from other universities and perhaps
professionals in the field.

The great thing about NOAA as I see it is that they provide, in addition to high quality research, tons of opportunities for students to really get involved both academically and professionally. They provide this conference here, but they also provide travel support and internship opportunities. So I think they are a really unique and effective organization in helping students with their scientific maturity.

“The LMRCSC aims to assist NOAA Fisheries in these efforts to broaden participation in ocean sciences by training students from underrepresented minority groups.” Through the Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center, while working on my master’s degree, I was pretty much already enrolled at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore as a master’s student conducting research and the funding that I received by the Living Marine Resource Cooperative Center jump-started my research and it also propelled me to finish my masters as well as my Ph.D.

This year during the poster session there were over I believe two hundred or so student participants. We had various themes ranging from climate change to healthy resilient ecosystems and fisheries economics, social impacts of fisheries on the communities.

This has really been a great experience. I’ve been funded by NOAA since I was an undergrad now I’m getting my master’s. I’m studying sand tiger sharks in the Delaware Bay and the surrounding waters. I’m writing a conservation plan because they’ve been listed everywhere else throughout their range as threatened or endangered, but on the east coast they’ve only been listed as a species of concern and so to prevent federal listing I’m trying to develop a plan to put extra management in place to protect them from threats such as pollutant exposure or overfishing. I think it’s been very rewarding.

getting to know other people and other researchers that are sort of going in the same route as us and also getting to know people from NOAA and professors from other universities makes a very rewarding experience, very important to network and we also get exposed to other research opportunities and job opportunities that are available for us.

A lot of what many of the scientist in this area are looking for is a way to get their work out there and get it into regulation and policy and so there is actually a need for the policy tools that we can provide hopefully, so that we can bridge the gap between actual change in legislation and regulation, and the good scientific information that's being provided by organizations like NOAA. So, it's good to know that there is actually a need and there are a lot of scientists who are legitimately interested in policy, which makes it nice to collaborate

"We're a science based services agency
Because of this dimension
Of bringing that scientific understanding
To bare on real world challenges."

This is the first EPP forum where we've had so many senior administration officials from NOAA We had the NOAA administrator herself Dr. Kathryn Sullivan. she was followed by the NOAA chief scientist Dr. Spinrad.

"NOAA is committed to the Educational Partnership Program And I look forward to continuing the guaranteed success of the Cooperative Science Centers."

It's been really fantastic to see that there is recognition of what the educational partnership means in terms of providing training and research exponential opportunities for students, and particularly students from underrepresented communities.

"It's a pleasure to be here to kick-off what is really a scientific forum that has a lot of importance for the future of not only the district, not only the Chesapeake Bay, but for the future of the country." Over the past twelve years NOAA has provided

the center about 40 million dollars that we have been able to use to train and graduate more than 400 students.

The Education Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions broadly prepares students for NOAA mission fields. Some students actually are doing their research at NOAA offices or NOAA labs, enabling the students to become workforce ready when they leave.

This has been a wonderful opportunity for UMES to host the NOAA conference. It's been a great occasion for us. Of course I want to thank my staff here at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, as well as the staff at NOAA and all of the partners that we have in helping to make this forum a great success.

The seventh EPP biennial Education and Science Forum has been a remarkable success and we look forward to 2016 when the EPP Cooperative Science Centers, the undergraduate scholars and the graduate research and training scholars will all come together for the next NOAA/EPP Education and Science Forum.