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Spring 2021 VCPC Practicum I and II

This semester, we have ten students in our VCPC Practicum I course, and five students in Practicum II. We are excited that this semester, for the first time, the VCPC Practicum is a cross-listed course at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). Two of our students in the Practicum I are from VIMS--a PhD candidate and a Masters of Science student.

Our **Practicum I** students are working on a variety of interesting projects:

- ***Requirement for Localities to Notify Property Owners of FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) Map Changes:*** This project analyzes how the state law requiring localities to notify property owners of changes to the mapped Special Flood Hazard Areas works, and whether other states' laws require localities to notify property owners of such a change.
- ***Wind Energy Siting Project with ODU:*** Working with partners at ODU, this project seeks to improve Department of Defense input and consultation procedures regarding the siting of offshore and onshore wind energy projects in the Commonwealth.
- ***Virginia's Tribal Relationship Framework:*** This student team is analyzing approaches from other jurisdictions and summarizing options regarding communication and coordination between the tribes and state and local government on a variety of issues.
- ***Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT):*** A student team is scoring six localities in Virginia's Middle Peninsula according to the RAFT Scorecard that VCPC developed with partners at the University of Virginia's Institute for Engagement & Negotiation, and Old Dominion's Institute for Coastal Adaptation & Resilience. [VCPC and its partners also are working currently with localities in the Northern Neck of Virginia to assist them with implementing projects on their Resilience Action Checklists; see the RAFT website for more information: [The RAFT.](#)]

Our **Practicum II** students are working on the following projects:

- ***Abandoned and Derelict Vessels (ADVs):*** A student is working with partners at Longwood University and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to identify policies to fund and adequately address an increasing number of abandoned and derelict vessels in the Commonwealth's waters.
- ***Quick-Start Guide:*** To help initiate action on sea level rise and flooding planning and response, a student is developing a "quick-start guide" to provide citizens and localities with an easy-to-use reference to available tools and resources.

- **Revising the RAFT Scorecard:** A team of students is working with a graduate student at UVA to revise the RAFT Scorecard for use by localities in developing a prioritized list of resilience projects to include in Virginia's first Coastal Resilience Master Plan. The students will seek feedback on the draft revised Scorecard from localities and planning district commissions before providing it to the Governor's Special Assistant for Coastal Adaptation and Protection.

Announcement



New VCPC Assistant Director

VCPC is excited to welcome our new Assistant Director, Gray Montrose. She joins us from the Environmental Section of the Virginia Office of the Attorney General, so she brings extensive knowledge of Virginia's natural resource agencies with whom we frequently partner. Welcome, Gray!

Spring Practicum Student Highlights

We asked our students why they decided to take our Practicum I course, and what they enjoy about VCPC so far. Here were some of their responses:

"I signed up for VCPC to learn more about how Virginia is responding to emerging problems in coastal resiliency, and help find policy solutions that can help coastal communities protect themselves. I



chose to work on a white paper which will address how local governments need to respond to changes in FEMA flood maps to better help them understand their responsibilities, and what resources they can use to help their citizens understand what these changes mean for them." - Andrew Major, J.D. Candidate 2021

"As a scientist, I want to maximize the positive impact my research can have—both on the environment and on communities. I joined the course to better understand how science is translated into policy right here in my own state, and its ultimate effects on the people who live here. I have enjoyed learning how to communicate with lawyers and policymakers, as well as delving into how complex public policy can be." - Abigail Sisti, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, PhD Candidate



"I was excited to return to my home state to begin law school at William & Mary, and the Virginia Coastal Policy Center was one of my largest attractions to the school because it gives students a chance to work on an incredibly wide array of real-world issues on the local, state, and national level. This semester I'm working with a partner on a project related to a Virginia statute that's triggered by certain updates to FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area maps. Only a few weeks into the semester, we have already made contacts and met with representatives from Virginia localities, as well as state and federal agencies. While the project has given us the opportunity to make connections, and practice legal research on a real-world problem, we also hope that the end result will provide guidance

and tools that will be helpful to localities across the Commonwealth.” - Alston Underwood, J.D.
Candidate 2022



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