

VIMS grad student participates in statewide research forum

(February 9, 2011) Patrick Lynch of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science joined five other College of William & Mary graduate students in presenting cutting-edge research at the Graduate Student Research Forum in Richmond on February 3.

The event gave general assembly members, industry and government representatives, university administrators, and the general public an opportunity to speak face-to-face with outstanding graduate researchers from throughout the Commonwealth.

The annual forum, hosted by the Virginia Council of Graduate Schools, highlights the benefits of graduate education to the economic, social, and civic development of the Commonwealth.

William & Mary graduate students presented research in a number of areas identified as priorities by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, emphasizing the connection between university research and the Commonwealth's economic success.

Lynch, a Ph.D. student in the School of Marine Science at VIMS, presented a poster describing his study of the relationship between filter-feeding by Atlantic menhaden and water quality in Chesapeake Bay. The study, part of a larger effort to understand the role of menhaden in the Bay ecosystem, helped address public concerns about the status of the Atlantic menhaden stock in light of a major commercial fishery in Virginia's bay and coastal waters, as well as interest in the fish as a natural filterer for improving Bay water quality.

Linda Schaffner, Associate Dean of Academic Studies at VIMS, says "Patrick's research on menhaden is typical of the kind of studies pursued by our grad students—with real-world findings that directly affect the Commonwealth's citizens and our marine resources."

The other W&M graduate students showcased their research on next-generation magnetic storage media (Jonathan Skuza, Physics), implant surfaces for improved bone attachment (Laura Rickard, Applied Science), wireless sensor networks (Matt Keally, Computer Science), archaeology of Jewish communities in the Caribbean (Derek Miller, Anthropology), and energy efficiency in building construction (Shannon Chance, Education).

At the forum, the Virginia Council of Graduate Schools unveiled a professional video highlighting graduate student research accomplishments across Virginia. Megan Ivory's top-notch physics research on ultra-cold atoms was featured in W&M's segment of the video.



VIMS graduate student Patrick Lynch describes his menhaden research during the statewide graduate student forum. Photo by SL Sanderson.

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Laurie Sanderson, W&M's Dean of Graduate Studies and Research in Arts & Sciences, adds "Our graduate students are conducting innovative research that addresses pressing issues, and are enthusiastic about sharing the excitement of discovery with undergraduate students, other graduate students, and the public."

More information about the research forum and the Virginia Council of Graduate Schools is available at www.vacgs.net.