



#### GENERAL UNIVERSITY NEWS

## Stony Brook University Announces Formal Partnerships With Atlantis Marine World And The Riverhead Foundation

**SBU's SoMAS joins ranks of major universities collaborating with regional aquariums and preservation foundations to advance marine research and education**

STONY BROOK, N.Y., August 25, 2009 -- Stony Brook University's School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (SoMAS,) Atlantis Marine World Aquarium, and the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation today announced a public-private partnership that will promote collaboration between the three institutions. The partnership makes the research expertise of SoMAS faculty available in support of Atlantis Marine World Aquarium and Riverhead Foundation efforts, and provides Stony Brook University students with opportunities for hands-on learning in the fields of aquaculture, science education, and marine animal rehabilitation.

"I am delighted that we are able to establish an official collaboration between three amazing entities; each committed to environmental education, research, and the protection, rescue and rehabilitation of marine life," said President Samuel L. Stanley, Jr. "This promising and exciting initiative brings together the very best each of the partners has to offer. It is an example of an agreement between people with a shared mission and a desire to achieve mutual goals in the best possible setting."

"This partnership is unique in that it unites a public non-profit organization--Stony Brook University; a private non-profit organization--the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation; and a private enterprise--Atlantis Marine World," said Dr. David Conover, Dean of the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences. "We are thrilled to form this alliance with these two vital Long Island institutions, both of which provide unique opportunities for education and practical experience in marine science."

SoMAS recently initiated undergraduate degree programs in marine biology and marine vertebrate biology and this partnership will provide interested students with opportunities to gain real-world practical experience through internships at Atlantis Marine World Aquarium, a full-scale aquarium, and at the Riverhead Foundation for Marine Research and Preservation, New York State's only authorized marine mammal and sea turtle rescue and rehabilitation center. Riverhead Foundation staff will also enrich the SoMAS student experience by teaching classes on marine mammals and rehabilitation of marine mammals and sea turtles.

"SoMAS students have helped us in our rescue work in the past, and we were impressed with their knowledge and enthusiasm," said Robert DiGiovanni, director of the Riverhead Foundation who also teaches a course on rehabilitation of sea turtles and marine mammals Stony Brook Southampton. "We look forward to SoMAS students helping us with our animal rehabilitation efforts, our public education programs, and our research projects such as the New York state marine mammal and sea turtle abundance study."

At Atlantis Marine World, SoMAS students interested in science education will fill docent positions and learn how the aquarium provides an interactive and exciting educational experience that emphasizes the importance of marine life and environmental preservation.

"Atlantis Marine World aims to not just entertain visitors, but to also inform



Joe Yaiulli, Co-founder and curator of Atlantis Marine World Aquarium; Dr. Samuel L. Stanley, Jr., President, Stony Brook University; David Conover, Dean, School of Atmospheric and Marine Sciences; Robert DiGiovanni, Director of the Riverhead Foundation.



John Dunleavy, Riverhead Town Council member; Barbara Blass, Riverhead Town Council member; Fred

them about marine life and aquatic ecosystems,” said Joe Yaiullo, aquarium co-founder and curator. “Through internships, SoMAS students will have the opportunity to learn about exhibit design and innovative methods of communicating information about science and nature to the public.”

Thiele, Jr., NYS Assemblyman; Marc Alessi, NYS Assemblyman; Dr. Samuel L. Stanley, Jr., President, Stony Brook University; Robert DiGiovanni, Director of the Riverhead Foundation; Joe Yaiulli, Co-founder and curator of Atlantis Marine World Aquarium; Philip Cardinale, Riverhead Town Supervisor; Ed Romaine, Suffolk County Legislator

With the rapid growth of its programs on the Southampton campus, there are now over 400 undergraduates students pursuing B.S. or B.A. degrees within SoMAS. “With Riverhead positioned midway between our Stony Brook and Southampton campuses, this partnership will give all SoMAS undergraduate students a great and nearby opportunity to supplement their education outside the university setting and to reach out to the larger Long Island community,” said Dr. Conover.

#### About the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at Stony Brook University

The School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (SoMAS) is the State University of New York's center for marine and atmospheric research, education, and public service. With more than 85 faculty and staff and more than 500 students engaged in interdisciplinary research and education, SoMAS is at the forefront of advancing knowledge and discovering and resolving environmental challenges affecting the oceans and atmosphere on both regional and global scales.

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