Faculty and Staff

Tara Cox, Ph.D.

Dr. Tara Cox is an Assistant Professor in the Marine Science Program with a focus on conservation biology and ecology of large marine vertebrates. Cox began her career in marine science studying dolphin behavior in Baja California. She then received a Master’s in Coastal Environmental Management and Ph.D. in Ecology from Duke University. She gained policy experience as the Assistant Scientific Program Director at the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission in Bethesda, Maryland. She also taught at Pfeiffer University and conducted post-doctoral research at Duke University’s Center for Marine Conservation. Her research has always centered on ecological research that has direct applications to conservation of long-lived marine vertebrates. Specifically, her dissertation research focused on harbor porpoises in the Gulf of Maine and her post-doctoral work involved collaborating with global researchers on assessing bycatch of marine mammals, sea turtles, and seabirds. More recently, her graduate students are conducting research as varied as policy of oyster reef restorations to foraging ecology of bottlenose dolphins.

Mary Carla Curran, Ph.D.

Dr. Mary Carla Curran is an Associate Professor in the Marine Science Program at Savannah State University whose area of expertise is in fish biology and marsh ecology. However, her interests span these areas as well as those involving the impact of human activities (particularly construction and contaminants) on estuaries, invertebrates, and marine education. Curran began her undergraduate training in the Marine Science program at University of South Carolina where she graduated Magna Cum Laude. She then earned a B.S. Honors degree in Zoology as a Fulbright Scholar at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. Her doctoral work in Biological Oceanography was completed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. She has held two postdoctoral positions, one at Rutgers University with Dr. Kenneth W. Able and another supported by the National Science Foundation and NATO at the Stazione Zoologica di Napoli in Italy with Dr. Flegrea Bentivegna. Before joining the faculty at SSU, Dr. Curran taught as an Assistant Professor at the University of South Carolina at Beaufort. Her current projects are focused mainly in estuarine habitats in coastal Georgia and South Carolina and include the use of estuaries by flatfishes, behavior and movement patterns of blackcheek tonguefish and contaminant loading in flounder in coastal Georgia. Her graduate students have conducted research related to her primary interest in flatfish ecology, but also a wide-array of other topics: prevalence of parasitism and behavioral changes associated with isopod parasites on grass shrimp, the effect of ray feeding pits on meiofauna, life history of cobia, bycatch in crab traps, and designing K-12 activities related to marsh ecology. She is actively involved in the Southeastern Estuarine Research Society (1998-present) as Coordinator of Student Travel Awards and is also a member of ASLO (2004-present), SETAC (2003-present), and the Estuarine Research Federation (2001-present). Matthew Gilligan, Ph.D.

Dr. Matthew Gilligan teaches courses in and coordinates the undergraduate and graduate Marine Sciences programs at Savannah State University. He received his B.A. in Biology from Hartwick College in 1972 and earned his Ph. D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Arizona in 1980. In the same year, he accepted a position as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences to teach in what was then a new degree program in Marine Biology. Since then, Dr. Gilligan has helped to develop a strong program and taught many of the core courses, including marine biology, marine analysis techniques, technical writing, ichthyology, biostatistics, and marine ecology. In 2001, he was chosen as the Board of Regents 2001-2002 Distinguished Professor at SSU. He has chaired the Education sub-panel of the National Oceanographic Partnership Program Ocean Research and Resources Advisory Panel, Education Committees of the Southern and National Associations of Marine Laboratories, Gray’s Reef National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council and was a member of the advisory boards of the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography and Skidaway Marine Science Foundation. He has been the Principal Investigator for externally funded grants and contracts totaling $5.6 million at SSU. He testified on ocean education and diversity before the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy in Charleston, SC on January 15, 2002 and moderated a panel on the future ocean workforce and diversity at the Conference on Ocean Literacy in Washington, D.C. in June 2006. His interests include the biology and ecology of marine fishes, marine conservation, and ocean policy.

Christopher Hintz, Ph.D.

Dr. Christopher Hintz is an assistant professor in the Marine Science Program at Savannah State University coordinating

the development of SSU's Aquarium Certificate Program. Hintz graduated from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering and continued at RHIT to receive his M.S. in Chemical Engineering (Environmental Engineering Minor) in 1998. Hintz' master's research focused on a biological filtration technology which used algae cultures to remediate polluted aquatic systems. During Hintz' doctoral research at the University of South Carolina and later in his post-doctoral position within the same laboratory at USC, Hintz developed specialized culture techniques to replicate deep-sea environments. These techniques were used for culturing benthic foraminifera to investigate environmental and biological effects on their calcareous biomineralization mechanisms. Most recently, Hintz developed a state-of-the-art CO2 control system to replicate pre-industrial revolution or near future dissolved CO2 concentrations for long-term (6-12 month) laboratory culture systems. With this controlled-culture technology, Hintz plans to investigate the biogeochemical influences anthropogenic CO2 and ocean acidification has on phytoplankton calcifiers and potential changes in the inorganic carbon cycle. Hintz specializes in environmental chemical analysis, technique development, filtration, and remediation.

Dionne Hoskins, Ph.D.

Dr. Dionne Hoskins received her B.S. degree in Marine Biology from Savannah State College in 1992 and her doctorate in Marine Sciences from the University of South Carolina in 1999. She worked briefly as a postdoctoral fellow in the newly established Marine, Environmental Science, and Biotechnology Research Center at SSU in 1999 but was tasked in 2000 by the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) of NOAA Fisheries to develop a Cooperative Marine Education and Research (CMER) program at the university, the first of its kind at a historically Black university. Since then, Hoskins has worked as a Fishery Biologist through the Galveston Laboratory of NOAA Fisheries and as an Associate Graduate Professor in the Marine Science program at SSU. Hoskins is based in Savannah and works with undergraduate and graduate students on a variety of ecological research topics. As a benthic ecologist, her research interests revolve around the ecology of deposit feeding organisms in marine sediments. However, recent projects have examined the recovery of a transplanted marsh, the effects of fishing and disease on blue crab populations, and seasonal fluctuations of macrofaunal and microbial communities in shallow sediments. Her current graduate student is studying sea turtle populations in the U. S. Virgin Islands. Dr. Hoskins also hosts high school students in her lab, one of whom is working on socioeconomic project trying to document the historical role of African-Americans in the coastal economy of Georgia. She teaches graduate courses in benthic ecology, advanced environmetrics, coastal zone management, and fishery population dynamics. She also is program manager of the SSU component of the NOAA Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center.

Gregory Hunter Gregory Hunter is the Marine Science Outreach & Camp Coordinator at Savannah State University. He received his B.S. in Marine Science in 2003 and his Master’s in Public Administration in 2007. He completed internships at Hampton University, Savannah State University, and the Savannah – Chatham Fair Housing Council. He has also taught high school math and science classes at St. Paul Academy for Boys and Girls.

Nadia Meyers

Nadia Meyers is a Benthic Research Technician with the Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center (LMRCSC) focusing on benthic invertebrate taxonomy. In 2001, she received her B.S. in biology with a marine option at Millersville University, Pennsylvania. As an undergrad, Nadia conducted independent research on the spatial learning of octopuses, tidal influence on species diversity in the Chesapeake Bay, and habitat preference of the neon goby in Honduras. She also gained tank maintenance experience as an aquarist intern for the Wetlands Institute in Stone Harbor, New Jersey, and the Pittsburgh Zoo & Aquarium in Pennsylvania. Nadia later interned for the National Aquarium in Baltimore working with marine mammals. After graduating, Nadia taught marine science at the Marine Science Consortium in Wallops Island, Virginia. Nadia accepted an internship from Bloomsburg University to study the effects of El Nino/La Nina on the distribution of eastern pacific barnacles while conducting contract work for the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) collecting and conducting nutrient analysis of Pacific water samples. In 2004, she accepted a position with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as a Wildlife Biologist for the Southeastern Regional Taxonomic Center (SERTC). Her primary focus was on invertebrate taxonomy of macro and meiofauna. Nadia is currently a 2nd year graduate student assessing marine science student success by evaluating processes and outcomes of matriculating and graduated students within the Marine Science Programs at Savannah State University.

Matthew Ogburn, Ph.D.

Dr. Matthew Ogburn is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow with the Living Marine Resources Cooperative Science Center (LMRCSC) working in the thematic areas of quantitative fisheries and essential fish habitat. He earned his B.S. in Biology from Duke University. He earned his M.S. in Marine Sciences from The University of Georgia, where he studied dieback of salt marsh grasses in coastal Georgia. His doctoral work was conducted at the Duke University Marine Laboratory, where he studied blue crab recruitment dynamics, larval behavior, and physiology. Dr. Ogburn’s research addresses recruitment, larval transport, population dynamics and ecology of commercially important invertebrates. Follow Dr. Ogburn's blog From the Shore on ocean science, policy, conservation and education. website

Carol Pride, Ph.D.

Carol Pride received her Ph. D. from the University of South Carolina in the Marine Sciences. Prior to this she received a B.A. degree in Environmental Science from Wesleyan University (CT). She has held two postdoctoral researcher positions: one at USC in the Department of Geology and one at the Marine Science Institute of the University of California in Santa Barbara. In addition, she served two years as a visiting assistant professor at the College of Charleston where she taught oceanography and biology courses. Pride is now an Associate Professor in the Department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics’ Marine Sciences Program at Savannah State University where she teaches undergraduate (Marine Science I, Physical Geology, Marine Sediments, Biological Oceanography) and graduate (General Oceanography, Oceanic Change) courses. She has also chaired the graduate admissions committee of the Marine Science M.S. program since it began in 2002. Pride’s research interests include marine sedimentation, paleoceanography, and paleoecology. She uses micropaleontology and stable isotope biogeochemistry to better understand connections between physical processes in the ocean, marine primary production, and the marine sediment record. Her previous studies concentrated on climatic influences on waters of the Gulf of California and the Southern Ocean. Pride’s current research with SSU students is focused on the South Atlantic Bight and the Benguela Current system off southwest Africa. Pride and her students are investigating the utility of benthic foraminifera and diatoms as indicators of salinity in Georgia estuaries; the impact of a migrating shell ridge on salt marsh vegetation and sediment accumulation; seasonal, interannual, and downstream variations in estuarine planktonic diatom communities; and characterization of benthic foram assemblages on the Georgia shelf. Pride and her students are also active in community outreach and deliver hands-on lessons on plankton and marine geology to Savannah area schools.

Captain Jay Rosenzweig

Captain Jay Rosenzweig accomplishments in the Marine Science Program include: inshore and offshore hook and line and longline fishing for both lab specimens and instruction, inshore and offshore trawling for biological and microbiological specimens, shuttling student and visiting groups to local barrier islands, inshore and offshore dolphin surveys including capture of an entangled dolphin, dectecting shallow spots in the cap over the Floridian Aquifer using sonar, oil and chemical spill recovery training as captain of the oil skimmer drag boat, captain for oceanographic surveys of the Savannah River estuary, facilitating river bottom core sampling and collection of bivalves and crustaceans, serving as captain responsible for a fiber optic cable laying project 60 mi offshore and serving as offshore dive captain. He has been an instructor for introduction to navigation, GPS and radio communications, and boat handing/trawling for undergraduate and graduate students. He is responsible for maintaining and operating the University's research vessels (outboard and inboard diesel powered), maintaining the multi-thousand gallon seawater system, maintaining raw water pumping system for the seawater system, designing and maintaining pumping and live well systems on vessels, and assisting students with design and construction of scientific equipment.

Outside of the University, Captain Jay has served two years as crew and operator of the pilot boat for the Savannah Bar Pilot's Association, seven years as part-time captain for Savannah Belle Ferry, operated vessels for dolphin watches and private charters of up to 40 passengers, and is a charter boat captain for inshore and nearshore fishing, passenger and cargo shuttle to Hilton Head and Daufuskie Islands, trips to barrier islands, bird and dolphin watches, and natural photography.

Joseph P. Richardson, Ph.D.

Dr. Joseph P. Richardson joined the faculty at Savannah State University in January 1979 and after 27 years of committed teaching and research, he retired from his full professorship in 2007 commit himself to his his family, his outside interests, and to his consulting company, Coastal Environmental Analysis; http://ceasurf.com. We wish him much success and thank him for his contributions to the SSU Marine Science Program.