

**The Associated Colleges of the South**  
**Mid Term Report**  
**Mini-Grants: Introductory Science Courses for Non-Majors Program**

Name of Person Submitting Report: Malcolm Hill

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Institution: University of Richmond

Title of Project: Making the land-sea connection in inner-city Richmond classrooms: Bringing the Chesapeake to school and bringing students to the Bay.

Date(s) of Project: 07/01/2006-06/30/07

Amount Awarded: \$14,210

1. Original Goals & Objectives

*Marine Biology of the Chesapeake* (BIOL 111) was designed to introduce University of Richmond (UR) students to the biology and ecology of the Chesapeake Bay. In addition, this new science course for non-majors was designed to be a service-learning course. A major component of the course involves getting UR students into local elementary schools to share what they've learned with local 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Our objectives include several classroom site visits and a daylong field trip to three sites along the York River to measure water quality parameters.

2. Any Changes Made in Goals/Objectives

This project originally planned on partnering with A. V. Norrell Elementary School (AVNES). A series of floods in the city of Richmond forced the closure of that school. AVNES was chosen for a number of reasons including the make-up of the student body (which is poor and >95% African American) and the location of the school (it was built over a landfill). The socioeconomic disparity in the Highland Park neighborhood where this school is located is striking when compared to the rest of the city of Richmond. The flooding of AVNES was directly related to the poor planning that went in to the construction of this building. Unfortunately, AVNES students were sent to area schools and this project lost the partner school identified in the original grant application. However, we had also been working with Overby-Sheppard Elementary School (OSES) with the same program in mind. OSES is located in the Highland Park neighborhood and has a nearly identical student body to AVNES. We have established important connections with the teachers at OSES and the switch will have no effect on the major goals of this project.

### 3. Activities Underway and/or Completed

*Marine Biology* was approved for inclusion in the university's curriculum at the beginning of the fall semester. Subsequently, the majority of activities associated with this course have focused on building relationships with the local elementary teachers who are science specialists. We have been working with science, math and art teachers at OSES to ensure that our activities match with their curricular goals. Specifically, we have coordinated two class visits for the spring semester and are close to securing a date for our field trips with OSES. We are also preparing for a substantial podcast project that will create material of service to local elementary school teachers as they plan their science curricula. To achieve this goal, I have worked closely with Dr. Tricia Stohr-Hunt, who is the elementary science specialist in the Education Department at the University of Richmond. She will be working with students in the *Marine Biology* class to inform them of the state "Standards of Learning" that guide the vast majority of instruction in Virginia classrooms. I have also recruited a senior Biology and Education double major to help coordinate many of our course activities.

### 4. Any Snags or Unanticipated Delays

The primary issue that I had to deal with was the closure of AVNES. This, however, has not resulted in any delays.

### 5. Approved Budget:

The approved budget included:

Stipends for students to run workshops in May, 2007 (\$3906)

Travel (\$1131)

Water sampling supplies and equipment (\$8579)

Student housing (\$900)

### 6. Financial Accounting from Receipt of Funds Through December 15, 2006

No funds have been spent as of 12/15/06.

### 7. Other Information

None

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