



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N.E. Aquarium, UMass join forces

By [Matt Rocheleau](#) | GLOBE STAFF MARCH 04, 2014

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The New England Aquarium and the University of Massachusetts Boston plan to join forces to advance marine research, education, and training opportunities at both institutions, officials said.

Under the partnership, set to be announced this week, UMass faculty will conduct research at the aquarium, and aquarium scientists will teach and conduct research at the university. The agreement will allow more undergraduates to intern at the aquarium and graduate students to work with aquarium researchers.

The partnership is the first of its kind for the aquarium. It already teams up, on a smaller scale, with Roger Williams University in Rhode Island.

For UMass, the partnership builds upon recent investments for the college in science studies, including

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creating a school to oversee all of its environmental studies programs, expanding its Nantucket research station, and building a \$182 million, 220,000-square-foot integrated sciences complex scheduled to open next fall.

Chancellor J. Keith Motley said collaborating with the aquarium “was a no-brainer.”

“The aquarium is one of the foremost research aquariums in North America, and we’re committed to excellence in research,” Motley said. “We’re a leader in environmental science. We’ve been out in front of this field for a long time.”

He said many UMass Boston students grew up locally and stay in the area after graduating

“They’re familiar with the problems we face here on New England’s coast,” Motley said. “These students are going to be here to help solve them, and they will then bring that impact and change to other parts of the world.”

A dozen aquarium researchers have already been appointed as research faculty, including one who is teaching a course.

Among those appointed to the college faculty is aquarium researcher Michael Tlusty, who helped spearhead the collaboration. He said the partnership will help highlight a key component of the aquarium that is often overlooked.

“We’re often thought of first as an aquarium where little kids go to see fish, but we also do a lot of research about conservation, right whales, and many other areas,” Tlusty said. “This will give us a more academic face to the research we do.”

Robyn Hannigan — dean of the School for the Environment at UMass Boston, located on Columbia Point in Dorchester — said the fit between the institutions will be seamless.

“The breadth of expertise is so complementary, there’s really no redundancy,” Hannigan said.


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