

# The role of marine operations staff at NAML Labs

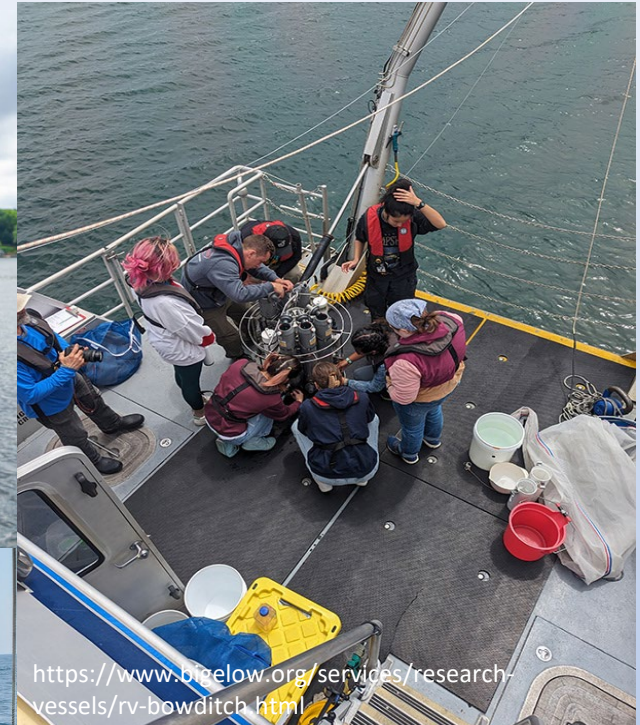
*Connecting the people that keep things afloat*



<https://marinesciences.uconn.edu/rvct-gallery/>



<https://www.gvsu.edu/wri/education/>



<https://www.bigelow.org/services/research-vessels/rv-bowditch.html>



<https://rucool.marine.rutgers.edu/academics/master-of-operational-oceanography/>



Photo credit Steve Evert, Stockton University

# The role of marine operations staff at NAML Labs

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## Why have I offered this topic?

1. Diversity of NEAMGLL labs and the scope of their marine operations
  - NEAMGLL labs probably operate > 100 vessels from paddle craft to global ships
  - NEAMGLL labs probably employ > 75 marine operations support staff
2. West Coast [SBSA](#) unites most of their marine operations teams
  - I don't see this kind of collaboration on the East and GL coasts
  - Is there a need? Can we create a space? Should/can we partner with SBSA?
3. As an organization we need more engagement beyond our delegates – let's be more inclusive of our support staff in general (after all, they run the labs!)
  - The networking concept could be extended to other sectors of our lab teams if we give them the tools or create the space (i.e. outreach coordinators)





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## Large labs and marine operations

- 9 of 31 labs are UNOLS members. 3 operate an ARF vessel.
- If most of us are not UNOLS-guided...
  1. what are we using as standards for our small boat operators?
  2. what training are we providing our students?

## Medium/small labs and marine operations – 80% of NEAMGLL

- Options for developing, updating, refining safety policies might include;
  - USCG auxiliary safe boating guidance - minimal
  - NOAA and WHOI Small Boat Operator Training Course (limited entry)
  - AMSEA programs (commercial fisheries oriented but can be applied)
  - USFWS Motorboat Operator Certification Course (MOCC – limited entry)
  - **Scientific Safe Boating Association (MOTC – based on USFWS MOCC)**
  - Others?



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Medium and small labs may benefit the most from networking when it comes to safety

All labs could benefit from the topic of student training and career options exposure

- What do we do to expose our students to the opportunities of at-sea jobs?
- What do we do to prepare them?
- Certifications
  - What can we offer? Who does what?
    - Not all student can/will/want to get a USCG license – what other options are there to increase employability and reciprocity?
- Break-out conversations



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Why have I rolled the student training component into this conversation?

1. The marine operations staff are the trainers
  - Formal or informal – the students learn from the marine ops staff
  - Do we put enough weight and value on this as a part of their overall educational experience?
2. Undergraduate observations over past 5-10 years (my own);
  - Decreasing baseline skill sets and comfort levels on board
    - generational, pandemic and other factors?
  - Significant decrease in hand and power tool familiarity



A (personally) renewed vision of the role of marine labs for delivering safety and operational skills to early level students with attention to increasing the comfort level of students from all backgrounds

# Engaging students in the culture of safety

*Tips and tricks to go beyond the minimum safety requirements*

## Dockside chats and signed waivers are not enough

- Students preparing for field and at-sea careers need structured training opportunities
  - Safety and practical skills
- Credentials are key to student success – build that CV!
- Marine labs and their staff should take the initiative to promote these efforts. Lab Directors need to give them the tools and the time.



# Engaging students in the culture of safety

*Tips and tricks to go beyond the minimum safety requirements*

## Recognize the diversity of your student body and create equal experiences for all

- Avoid making any assumptions
  - Boats, marshes, and big water can be intimidating
  - Marine operations staff play critical role in creating the comfortable environment
- Students are not likely to disclose concerns like anxiety, ADHD and other diagnosed or subtle disorders that affect their behavior and experience in field settings





# Safety and operational skills for all!

*Values gained at Stockton's marine lab*

## Students love it!



- Decreases barriers amongst different groups
- Increases self-confidence
- Strengthens student-student relationships
- Helps build early level CV content



# The role of marine operations staff at NAML Labs

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Where do I hope today's conversation goes?

- Shared examples/stories amongst newly networked marine ops folks
- The role of marine labs in delivering safety and operational skills
- Can/should there be a NEAMGLL platform to connect labs on safety issues?
  - Standing discussion at annual meetings, story sharing activities, etc.

**Break out** – marine ops staff first but any lab managers or others welcome

**Where** - Physically into another room and virtually into the provided break out room

**If you wish** - Fresh air and free time



A photograph taken from the deck of a boat during sunset. In the foreground, a large metal crane hook and chain are visible, hanging from the top of the frame. Two people are seen from behind, looking out at the ocean. The person on the left is wearing a red jacket, and the person on the right is wearing a white shirt and an orange life vest. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, orange glow across the sky and water. The text "Move to breakout room or just take a break!" is overlaid in white, italicized font across the middle of the image.

*Move to breakout room  
or just take a break!*

# Marine operations break out discussion

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- Quick around the table
- Initial topics today

Q. Do you believe there is a need for more formalized marine ops training at our labs?

- Any examples of what you are doing?
- Any examples of what would you like to do?
- Any success stories of science students turned marine ops for a career?



# Marine operations break out discussion

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## Questions and discussion for today/future

- Q. Does your lab train on hand tools, marine operations, knot tying, etc.?
- Q. What is your process for crew familiarization?
  - Do you use passenger waivers?
  - At what point do you insist on active drills? Scope and distance dependent?
- Q. Do you instruct on or allow student operators?
  - If yes, how are they approved?
- Q. Would a database – maybe of vessels, specialties and equipment be useful
- Q. Would a marine ops listserv for NEAMGLL be helpful?
  - Search for help/post questions (i.e. who else does shallow in-water/non-diving work and do they have a safety protocol to share?)