



**University of North Carolina Wilmington
Master of Coastal and Ocean Policy (MCOP) Program**

**Student Learning Outcomes
(Adopted September 10, 2013)**

The Master of Coastal and Ocean Policy (MCOP), housed in the Department of Public and International Affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences, is a professional, non-thesis, multidisciplinary degree program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to assume leadership roles in governmental and nongovernmental organizations involved in the formulation, implementation and administration of coastal and ocean policy. A diverse faculty – with expertise in a wide range of fields, such as public administration, law, economics, natural resource management and the physical and biological sciences – leads the new program. As a result, MCOP students will have the opportunity to work with faculty from the Center for Marine Science (CMS) and various academic departments including Economics and Finance, Environmental Studies, Health and Applied Human Services, Geography and Geology, Biology and Marine Biology, Chemistry and Biochemistry, and Physics and Physical Oceanography. Faculty members of these departments routinely direct and participate in academic and applied research, as well as regional engagement, focused on enhancing the governance of coastal and ocean policy issues.

Mission Statement:

Accordingly, the mission of the Master of Coastal and Ocean Policy (MCOP) is

To seek creative, scientifically sound solutions to coastal and ocean governance problems through relevant research, regional engagement and the education of future leaders committed to advancing the wise stewardship of coastal and ocean resources.

Students in the program will follow a unique curriculum that combines coursework taught by leading researchers in their respective disciplines in public policy analysis and coastal and marine sciences. A central focus of the curriculum will be on teaching students how to integrate science into government decision making processes in order to sustainably manage coastal and ocean resources in the U.S. and abroad. At the end of their educational experience, graduates of the Master of Coastal and Ocean Policy (MCOP) program should be able to demonstrate the following student learning outcomes (SLOs):

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

- Demonstrate an ability to define, frame, think critically about and utilize appropriate tools and frameworks to analyze information about important coastal and ocean policy problems;
- Demonstrate an ability to participate in the policy process by analyzing policy alternatives from different perspectives (e.g., scientific, economic, legal, political and social) and working effectively with government and nonprofit institutions to enhance the governance of coastal and ocean resources;
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively and professionally to diverse audiences involved in the governance of coastal and ocean resources (e.g., politicians, governmental boards and agencies, interest groups and the general public).

The student learning outcomes (SLOs) will be achieved through 42 graduate credit hours of coursework. The core curriculum consists of 24 credit hours (four classes or 12 hours) focused on approaches to public policy analysis. Students will also complete two science-oriented, three credit hour classes that present course content in a manageable framework for students with limited undergraduate coursework in the physical or biological sciences. Finally, students will be required to complete a project-oriented capstone class in coastal and ocean policy. To prepare for the project, students will enroll in a three credit hour seminar the semester prior to the capstone class. Students will be assigned to their capstone project at the start of the seminar and will be expected to begin work on the project. The seminar will also focus on professional development. The capstone experience and materials prepared by students during the two-course capstone sequence will be used to assess the students' ability to demonstrate these SLOs. During the capstone course, students will complete their applied coastal and ocean policy project. The remaining coursework will consist of 18 credit hours of electives. Three of the 18 hours must come from a list of approved courses with significant science-related course content. Six of the 18 hours must consist of electives in public management or policy analysis. The final 9 credit hours are general electives tailored to fit the student's professional career goals.