An invitation to apply for the position of
Dean of the School of Marine Science
and Director of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science

THE SEARCH

William & Mary (W&M), a public liberal arts and sciences research university with nationally ranked undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs, seeks an energetic and innovative new Dean of the School of Marine Science and Director of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS).

Founded in 1940, VIMS is one of the largest marine science centers in the U.S., with a focus on coastal and estuarine science. VIMS is unique among marine science institutions in its legal mandate to provide research, education, and advisory service to state government, citizens, and industry. In the years since its founding, VIMS has developed unique capabilities in people, practices, and infrastructure that allow it to provide the honest, unbiased science and guidance needed to help address the pressing issues facing our watersheds, estuaries, coasts, and ocean. VIMS offers graduate education in marine science through its School of Marine Science (SMS), a component of W&M, conferring graduate degrees in marine science at the M.A., M.S., and Ph.D. level. VIMS advances its mission by addressing cutting-edge scientific questions and effectively translating its research results and new technologies for the Commonwealth of Virginia (Commonwealth) and beyond.

The next VIMS Dean & Director will take the helm after a period of significant enhancements to research, education, advisory service programs, and infrastructure due to the vision and leadership of Dr. John Wells, who has served in the role since 2004. Reporting to the W&M Provost, the Dean & Director will provide the vision and leadership that are required for VIMS to be a world-renowned center of excellence in marine science, attracting the very best students and scholars in the nation, expanding the frontiers of science through research and discovery, educating the next generation of marine science leaders, and making an impact on the state, nation and world by applying this knowledge to important societal issues. The Dean & Director is responsible for the daily operations and strategic planning for VIMS and its approximately 425 faculty, staff, and students, and oversees an annual operating budget of $52 million. This dual role requires effective communication with W&M, navigating the relationship to ensure that there is meaningful connection, primarily through the SMS, while at the same time leading the operation of a separate non-residential research campus, and fulfilling the mandate for VIMS to serve the Commonwealth.

William & Mary, a public university in Williamsburg, Virginia, is the second oldest institution of higher learning in the United States. The university is proud of its role as the alma mater of generations of U.S. scholars, leaders, and public servants. Now, in its fourth century, it continues this tradition of excellence by combining the best features of an undergraduate college with the opportunities afforded by a modern research university. Its moderate size, dedicated faculty and staff, highly motivated students, and
distinctive history give W&M a unique character among public institutions and create a learning
environment that fosters close interaction among students and their faculty mentors.

Provost Peggy Agouris has appointed a 15-member search committee, chaired by Dr. Carl Friedrichs,
Glucksman Professor of Marine Science. The committee is assisted by the national executive search firm
Isaacson, Miller Inc. Inquiries, nomination, and applications should be directed in confidence to the search
firm.

WILLIAM & MARY

William & Mary is a “leading research university driven by the beating heart of the liberal arts.” Founded
in 1693 in what would become Virginia’s colonial capital, Williamsburg, the institution has evolved along
with the nation it serves and is now one of the top public liberal arts and sciences based research
universities in the country. W&M presently enrolls 8,939 students, 6,236 of which are undergraduates,
almost all full-time. Most undergraduates (75 percent) live on campus and 65 percent are in-state. About
30 percent of the total undergraduate population are students of color and over 50 percent are female.
In addition to undergraduate programs, W&M is home to 11 graduate programs in Arts & Sciences,
professional and graduate degree programs in Schools of Law, Business, and Education, as well as VIMS,
which is the home of the graduate program of the School of Marine Science.

W&M boasts the second-highest four-year graduation rate of any public university and, according to U.S.
News & World Report, ranks among the top five public universities in the country for undergraduate
teaching. Nearly 60 percent of undergraduates study abroad during their time at W&M, a participation
rate so high that the university is ranked as the top public, doctorate-granting institution for study abroad.
W&M also boasts the highest percentage among national public universities of undergraduate alumni
who go on to earn a Ph.D.

A variety of centers and institutes further support academics and research at W&M. Among these are the
Center for the Liberal Arts, the W&M Washington Center in the nation’s capital, the Reves Center for
International Studies, the Global Research Institute, the Charles Center, the Muscarelle Museum of Art,
the W&M University Libraries, the Studio for Teaching & Learning Innovation, the Reeder Media Center,
the Center for Geospatial Analysis, the Institute of Integrative Conservation, and the Keck Environmental
Field Laboratory.

Leadership

Peggy Agouris, an award-winning scholar and researcher, joined W&M as the sixth provost in 2019.
Provost Agouris was most recently the Dean of the College of Science at George Mason University and
director of the Center for Earth Observing and Space Research. A prolific researcher, Agouris also has a
strong record partnering with the private sector, serving as a principal investigator on technology transfer
projects.

Katherine A. Rowe, a leader in digital innovation of the liberal arts and former provost of Smith College,
became the 28th president of William & Mary in 2018. President Rowe is deeply interested in design
thinking, entrepreneurship and the digital humanities, and has been nationally recognized as an innovator
in higher education. Since joining W&M, she has engaged the campus community in a series of Thinking
Forward discussions, facilitating conversations around the Future of Knowledge, the Future of Work, and the Future of Service.

More information about William & Mary and these goals can be found at [www.wm.edu/thinkingforward](http://www.wm.edu/thinkingforward).

**VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF MARINE SCIENCE**

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science, founded in 1940 as the Virginia Fisheries Laboratory, has grown over the past eight decades to become one of the Nation’s largest and most well-respected marine science centers focused on coastal and estuarine science. VIMS began as part of William & Mary, first as the Marine Laboratory at Yorktown (1938) and then as the Virginia Fisheries Laboratory (1944). The Laboratory was named the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and became an independent institution by an Act of Virginia’s General Assembly in 1962, and then returned to the administrative umbrella of W&M in 1979. VIMS is unusual in its melding of three essential public functions: advisory and outreach services, cutting-edge research, and formal and informal education. The strengths of the Institute are in its diverse faculty, interdisciplinary approach to complex scientific questions, and provision of practical solutions to problems in the marine environment—all aided by a dedicated support staff and outstanding students.

Located in Gloucester Point, VA, the 42-acre main campus is situated near the confluence of the York River and the Chesapeake Bay, with ready access to the Atlantic Ocean. VIMS maintains a comprehensive suite of research and educational facilities, state-of-the-art analytical instruments and field equipment, and a fleet of both large and small coastal research vessels. The VIMS campus has transformed significantly in recent years, with the development of several new buildings and laboratories, including: Andrews Hall, the Catlett Burruss Research and Education Laboratory, Davis Hall, the Facilities Management Building, the Seawater Research Laboratory, and the planned Acuff Center for Aquaculture, a modern shellfish research hatchery to support Virginia’s rapidly expanding oyster aquaculture industry. VIMS’s Eastern Shore Laboratory, home to important work on clam aquaculture, bay scallop restoration, shark conservation, and coastal pollution and resiliency, has also enjoyed a major transformation, with a new seawater research lab, education building and administrative offices. In 2019, the launch of VIMS’s new 93-foot flagship research vessel *Virginia*, was built with a $10 million investment from the Commonwealth.

**Research**

VIMS fosters an approach to research that encourages and facilitates synergistic interactions among its core disciplines that focus on scientific problems ranging widely in scale from global to molecular. Nearly every marine science discipline and sub-discipline is represented on the faculty, from marine biology and ecology, to marine fisheries, marine geology, marine chemistry, physical oceanography, and modeling. Much of the research at VIMS is directly applicable to current and emerging management and policy issues that are important to the economy, and to the health and sustainability of natural resources.

Research programs at VIMS extend from inland watersheds to the open ocean, with primary emphasis on both regionally and globally important estuarine and coastal science and issues such as water quality, habitat conservation and restoration, fisheries management, aquaculture, effects of climate change, human health risks, and coastal flooding. Extending past the near-shore focus, many faculty also conduct research in the open oceans and at the poles, providing a whole ocean perspective on estuarine and
coastal science. VIMS receives about half of its annual operating budget through competitive grants and contracts from federal, state, and local agencies. The largest source of federal grant dollars is the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), followed by the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of the Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

VIMS has established a variety of research centers, programs, laboratory groups, and partnerships to address immediate and long-term issues in marine science. All share the common goal of providing superior research capabilities in marine and coastal sciences in collaboration with other academic institutions, industry, governmental agencies, and other stakeholders.

Advisory Service

As part of VIMS's broad legislative mission, the Institute serves as the Commonwealth of Virginia's center of expertise in the marine environment, bringing together governmental, economic, regulatory, and scientific communities. It is VIMS's role as technical advisor to the Commonwealth on matters related to marine and coastal resources that truly sets VIMS apart from most other higher education marine institutions. Since its inception over 80 years ago, VIMS has been charged by the Virginia General Assembly with providing technical advice to the legislature, administration, state agencies, industries, and citizens of the Commonwealth. This mandate has also stimulated a focus of VIMS on multidisciplinary research especially relevant to management and policy.

VIMS is a central partner in the Commonwealth’s environmental management infrastructure, working with the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Virginia Department of Health. Additionally, VIMS is responsible for responding to requests from the General Assembly, the Governor's Office, and the Secretary of Natural Resources. VIMS works with local governments and management agencies such as Soil and Water Districts and Planning District Commissions, and researchers participate in and represent the Commonwealth’s interests on regional commissions and associations such as the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Coastal Ocean Observing System, and the Chesapeake Bay Program. VIMS also has close management and research ties with many federal agencies (e.g., NOAA, EPA, USGS) that oversee the Chesapeake Bay, its watershed, and its resources. The VIMS advisory mission is further informed by VIMS research activities around the globe, that extend from polar regions to the Caribbean, Europe, South America, and Asia.

Academic Programs

The School of Marine Science (SMS) at VIMS is the graduate school in marine science for W&M. The SMS enrolls approximately 90 graduate students across four academic departments: Aquatic Health Sciences, Biological Sciences, Fisheries Science, and Physical Sciences. It confers a professional master's (M.A.) degree and two research (M.S. and Ph.D.) degrees in marine science. These programs prepare students to address societal and global challenges in estuarine, coastal, and marine systems. The SMS fosters academic excellence and provides a core graduate education program encompassing knowledge, scholarship, communication, and professional development. VIMS also puts an emphasis on holistic student development by offering programs and supports that focus on health and wellness.
The SMS has granted over 1,000 graduate degrees, making it one of the largest marine science graduate programs in the United States. SMS graduates have sought and achieved diverse career paths in colleges and universities, government agencies, consulting firms, marine education and outreach organizations, NGOs, and industry around the world. SMS alumni hold faculty positions at major universities and colleges in the U.S. and abroad. A significant percentage of graduates seek and attain research, management, and policy positions in federal agencies such as NOAA, NMFS, EPA, and USGS. More than 90 percent of SMS graduates have a job in the field of marine science at the time of graduation, and nearly all alumni are employed in marine science or closely allied fields.

As a part of W&M, VIMS is connected with the highly ranked programs in Arts & Sciences, Business, Education, and Law. Students can access courses, resources, and networks across these academic interests to enhance their graduate experience. SMS students are highly competitive for the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, National Sea Grant Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship, and National Sea Grant and National Marine Fisheries Survey Joint Fellowship programs. Those with interests in education and public outreach have many opportunities for professional development through coursework, workshops, and participation in VIMS education and outreach programs.

More information about VIMS can be found at www.vims.edu

ROLE OF DEAN & DIRECTOR

VIMS has a unique relationship to W&M, for in addition to being a critical part of the university, its mission includes providing essential advisory service to the Commonwealth, and VIMS receives its state support through a direct appropriation from the Virginia General Assembly and Governor. As such, the Dean & Director serves in a dual administrative role. The Dean & Director has ultimate responsibility for overseeing approximately 425 faculty, staff and students housed in four academic departments, four research centers and nine support units on the VIMS main campus, at the Kauffman Aquaculture Center in Topping, VA, and at the Eastern Shore Laboratory in Wachapreague, VA. Direct reports include: four department chairs, Chief Financial Officer, Associate Dean of Academic Studies, Associate Dean of Research and Advisory Services, Chief Operating Officer, Executive Director of Advancement, Director of the Chesapeake National Estuarine Research Reserve in Virginia, Director of the Virginia Sea Grant Program, and the Director of VIMS News and Media. The Dean & Director manages VIMS’s annual operating budget of $52 million.

OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT DEAN & DIRECTOR

VIMS is well-positioned to think boldly about its future during a time of rapid transformation of marine sciences and research. The next Dean & Director, working in close collaboration with the VIMS leadership team, will specifically address the following opportunities and challenges:

Establish and implement a new path of excellence for VIMS

The VIMS community is currently in the process of identifying areas of uniqueness and excellence that will form the pillars of the next strategic plan. With this foundation, the Dean & Director must engage all VIMS stakeholders, including university leadership, in a continuing, thoughtful discussion about the evolution
of VIMS and how best to build on the considerable existing strengths. VIMS is seeking a Dean & Director who can articulate an aspirational and innovative vision that ensures its continued leadership in research, education, and advisory service and as a vibrant partner both within W&M and externally.

Enhance VIMS impact on marine resource management and coastal resiliency for the Commonwealth

Many VIMS research programs produce results that have direct application to resource management and policy development at the state, regional, federal, and international levels. There is, and has always been, a focus on “science for solutions” at VIMS. Due to the nature of VIMS’s state advisory role, the organization is uniquely positioned for national and global leadership on the most pressing issues affecting coastal systems and communities, and the Dean & Director will work closely with VIMS’s faculty, staff, and students to guide policymakers on the economic and scientific needs for a healthier and more sustainable Chesapeake Bay. The next Dean & Director will help elevate VIMS’s profile and reputation, highlighting its vital role within the region and continue to raise its visibility and stature more widely, reinforcing the national and global reach and relevance in marine science.

Deepen and expand research

VIMS emphasizes interdisciplinary research that brings perspectives from a variety of disciplines to the search for new knowledge and for solutions to issue-driven questions. The research mission is supported by approximately 300 active grant and contract awards and also underpins the advisory and education missions. Heavy reliance on competitive grants and contracts to meet all three of VIMS’s missions requires the Dean & Director to be vigilant in tracking the federal landscape of funding agencies and to maintain an efficient and effective climate for proposal submission and meeting deliverables on funded projects. The Dean & Director will work closely with Associate Deans and faculty to support interdisciplinary research across VIMS and W&M, as well as advancing VIMS’s cutting-edge research that continues to address global change and its impact on water quality, coastal resilience, and sustainable fisheries and shellfish aquaculture.

Lead innovation in academic programming

The School of Marine Science (SMS) is a well-respected graduate program that also partners with W&M Arts & Sciences to offer an undergraduate marine science minor. Most recently, the SMS launched a new professional (M.A.) program designed to produce graduates with the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to translate, integrate, and apply marine science as part of a professional workforce the Commonwealth and Nation need to address issues of pressing societal concern. The Dean & Director will look to innovate with existing programs and to further integration and collaboration between VIMS and W&M, expanding academic, professional development, and research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. The Dean & Director will work closely with the Associate Dean of Academic Studies to support and expand student programs and services.

Advance diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts at VIMS

Many STEM fields face the challenge of attracting underrepresented minorities as students and faculty, and this is especially true within the field of marine science. VIMS established a Diversity and Inclusion
Committee in 2016, which reports directly to the Dean & Director. The committee has wide latitude in helping to create and maintain the best possible environment at VIMS in which diversity can thrive. The next Dean & Director will model and commit to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), set a vision and goals the DEI at VIMS into the future, and bring a track record of advancing this agenda in prior institutional environments.

**Maintain a vibrant and connected community**

VIMS boasts an exceptionally tight-knit community distinguished by its spirit of collaboration and care. VIMS has a history of robust educational and service programs that engage and support the local community, and there is opportunity to further VIMS presence as concerns about the economic, environmental, and human costs of climate change and sea-level rise continue to grow. It is important that the Dean & Director recognizes this special sense of community, both within VIMS, W&M, and locally. The Dean & Director will be committed to enthusiastically and regularly engaging with VIMS’s constituents, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, elected officials, and community stakeholders. The Dean & Director will continue to foster the collegial and inclusive environment that makes VIMS a vigorous center for engaged research and education.

**Develop and steward resources**

The VIMS budget is separate from W&M’s budget, giving the VIMS Dean & Director the authority, and indeed expectation, to lobby in Richmond and to the Virginia General Assembly for operating and capital construction funding. The Dean & Director must maintain strong relations with state and federal governmental funders, helping to identify and cultivate new and expanded grant opportunities and to respond nimbly to a dynamic funding landscape. Further, the Dean & Director will invest in expanding opportunities for technology transfer and private-sector partnerships to open up new revenue streams.

The Dean & Director will also be responsible for increasing philanthropic support for VIMS. W&M recently concluded a successful $1 billion For the Bold campaign, in which VIMS set a goal to raise $15 million by 2020. The Institute surpassed that goal, and thanks to 6,100 generous donors, achieved unprecedented success, raising $26.5 million. The Dean & Director will be expected to work closely with faculty, the development staff team, and the W&M Board of Visitors to continue to grow VIMS’s endowment to support its mission and vision.

**QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE**

While no candidate will have all the ideal qualifications, VIMS and W&M seek individuals with the following traits, experiences, and abilities:

- Scientific credibility. Ph.D. and record of scientific accomplishment sufficient to support a tenured faculty appointment at VIMS.
- Intellectual vision and a broad, interdisciplinary view of opportunities in basic and applied marine science. A successful track record in taking science to the public and to policymakers.
- Fundraising ambition and enthusiasm. Ideally, significant experience working successfully with donors.
• Public presence and exceptional communications skills; the ability to relate well to both scientists and non-scientists alike and to generate excitement around ideas and actions.
• Successful experience leading an intensive and diverse research and/or educational program, initiative, or enterprise.
• Demonstrated commitment to diversity in all its forms and a history of fostering inclusive communities.
• Strengths in team building, delegation, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Willingness to circulate widely, communicate openly, listen well, and lead through persuasion.
• A commitment to excellence and bold innovation, while respecting the culture and traditions of the institution.
• A collaborator and convener with the capacity to build consensus and develop an overarching vision, and to motivate and inspire stakeholders with differing priorities to ensure its realization.
• Integrity, creativity, and a high energy level.

TO APPLY

William & Mary/Virginia Institute of Marine Science has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. Confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations, should be sent in confidence to:

Pam Pezzoli, Ponneh Varho, or Katie Stellato
Isaacson, Miller, Washington D.C.
www.imsearch.com/7783

William & Mary/Virginia Institute of Marine Science values diversity and invites applications from underrepresented groups who will enrich the research, teaching and service missions of the university. William & Mary/Virginia Institute of Marine Science is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and encourages applications from women, minorities, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities.