

2023 Virginia Institute of Marine Science USAS Student Subunit Annual Report

The Aquaculture Collective (AquaCo)
Virginia Institute of Marine Science, William & Mary
PO Box 1346 | 1370 Greate Rd., Gloucester Pt., VA 23062

I. Membership

a. **Number of Members:** 19 confirmed; 49 others interested and receive AquaCo emails.

b. **Officers:**

President: Matthew LaGanke

Vice President: Natalia Schoenberg

President-elect: Julia Grenn

Secretary: Nihal Guennouni

Treasurer: William Calhoun

Advisor: Jessica Small

William Walton

Outreach Advisor: Anna Caputo

Undergraduate Representative Elisabeth Fink

c. **Subunit's Recommendation for the \$270 Student Early Bird Registration Travel Award to Aquaculture America**

Katherine Whittle, 2025, economics and biology. AquaCo recommends Katherine to receive the travel award. The organization asked students interested in attending Aquaculture America to submit a cover letter and description detailing why they would like to attend, what they hope to get out of the conference, and the topics they're interested in learning more about. In addition to receiving the highest scores for her application, Katherine has been engaged in organization events and demonstrates a wonderful enthusiasm for aquaculture and AquaCo.

II. Chapter Activities and Events

Fall 2023 marked the inaugural semester of The Aquaculture Collective (AquaCo), the Virginia Institute of Marine Science Student Subunit of the United States Aquaculture Society (USAS).

- Recruitment efforts began in Spring 2023. 4 undergraduate class announcements were made. Flyers were distributed around the VIMS and W&M campuses in public places. Emails were also sent out to various departments. 62 people signed up through the QR code.
- 2 interest meetings were held. In total, we had 15 people show up to these meetings.
- 5 members attended the Virginia Aquaculture Conference. This a two-day meeting in Newport News, Virginia, oriented for shellfish farmers in the mid-Atlantic region. 2 students gave presentations.

- 1 chapter meeting was held in November 2023. 14 members attended.
- 1 graphic element was created for AquaCo with the help of the VIMS Publication Center Manager (see below)
- 10,000 juvenile oysters were obtained from VIMS Aquaculture and Breeding Center. They are held on the VIMS research farm and will be used to conduct research on shellfish gear and blue crab interactions. The study will be deployed in January 2024.
- An election for the undergraduate representative was held. Three undergrads submitted applications, and a chapter-wide vote was held.
- 4 applicants applied for a chance to attend Aquaculture America in 2024.

III. Chapter Changes from previous year (if applicable)

N/A

IV. Chapter Struggles/Concerns or areas for improvement

We recently fundraised \$2,000 from the VIMS Office of Advancement, which will allow us to be more active in the coming semester. Future concerns include holding activities that entice both graduate and undergraduate students. We plan to recruit more students in the Spring through class announcements. The undergraduate representative will help in establishing our presence on social media.

V. Photos



AquaCo Graphic Element



Members at the Virginia Aquaculture Conference

VI. Treasurer's Report

Balance: \$2,012

Obtained: \$2,526

Spent: \$514

\$495 - 3 registrations to the Virginia Aquaculture Conference

\$19 – two members donated \$26 in total, to cover dues

The bulk of the funds will go towards a shellfish roast, deploying a research project, a farm tour, sending a member to Aquaculture America, and travel for chapter meetings.