



Environmental Studies in Woods Hole & at Sea

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Undergraduate students with SEA Semester® : Marine Biodiversity and Conservation program to host Sylvia Earle and other renowned oceanographers, conservationists and policy-makers at May 29 symposium highlighting recent Sargasso Sea research.

Woods Hole, MA, May 22, 2014—Undergraduate students with the SEA Semester: Marine Biodiversity and Conservation (MBC) program (www.sea.edu/MBC_program) will host a symposium on May 29, from 9am until 5pm at the SEA Semester/Sea Education Association campus in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The 3rd annual symposium includes formal student presentations and poster sessions on recently completed Sargasso Sea conservation and biodiversity research projects. Guest speakers include Sylvia Earle from Mission Blue, Vera Agostini from The Nature Conservancy, David Freestone with The Sargasso Sea Alliance, and John Hanning with Archimedes Aerospace. Representatives from Forest Trends Association, Wildlife Conservation Society, New England Aquarium, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Marine Biological Laboratory, University of Rhode Island, Institute of Marine Research, Norway, University of Connecticut, and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution will also be in attendance. This event is open to the public and a full symposium schedule can be accessed at www.sea.edu/MBC

As part of SEA Semester: Marine Biodiversity and Conservation (MBC), a twelve-week study abroad program (www.sea.edu/MBC_Program), these fourteen undergraduates—including nine women and two international students—have formulated policy and science research projects focused on the Sargasso Sea, a vast expanse of blue water situated in the mid-North Atlantic. Projects are multi-faceted, dealing both with conservation and policy strategies among fishing, shipping and biodiversity sectors as well as biodiversity of ecologically and economically important groups of organisms found in the Sargasso Sea. Student data and research also supplements organized international efforts to study and protect the Sargasso Sea, providing valuable information to stakeholders and creating outstanding networking opportunities for these future scientists and policy-makers. The MBC program began in early March at Sea Education Association's campus in Woods Hole, Massachusetts where students took classes in ocean policy, biological oceanography and nautical science to establish a conceptual framework in marine ecology, resource management and sailing. Students then spent the next five weeks (beginning in mid-April) at sea, sailing aboard the SSV *Corwith Cramer* from San Juan, Puerto Rico, to Bermuda, and on to New York City. During this portion of the semester, in addition to learning how to navigate and sail a tall ship and become members of a shipboard community, students conducted twice-daily surface and subsurface net tows, studying and cataloguing specimens for their science research

projects and worked with Sargasso Sea conservation stakeholders to understand the human connections to the Sargasso Sea and develop policy recommendations relating to their projects. The final portion of the program is now taking place on campus in Woods Hole, where students are completing scientific data analyses and preparing policy sector strategy recommendations for presentation at the May 29 symposium.

About SEA Semester®

SEA Semester (www.sea.edu) is the leading off-campus Environmental Studies program focused on the oceans. SEA Semester creates environmentally literate leaders who are prepared to address the defining issue of the twenty-first century: the human impact on the environment. The ideal SEA Semester student is highly motivated, passionate about learning, willing to seek out new challenges, and eager to become part of a unique learning community.

Unlike any other study abroad program, SEA Semester programs include both on-shore and at-sea components, wherein students spend the first portion of a semester on SEA's campus in Woods Hole, taking courses ranging from ocean science to public policy, nautical science and maritime history. These on-shore courses prepare students for the next portion of the program: sailing aboard one of SEA's sailing school vessels, where, in addition to conducting hands-on, field-based research projects, students also work as members of the ship's crew. Rigorous academics combined with the adventure of sailing aboard a tall ship create a truly one-of-a-kind study abroad program. All SEA Semester programs are accredited by Boston University and offer up to 18 semester credits. While the program is renowned for its excellence in the sciences, all SEA Semester programs are interdisciplinary and welcome students from any major. Students also gain valuable experience in leadership training, group dynamics, and team-building: all areas that help students develop into well-rounded, confident, open-minded and contributing members of society.

About Sea Education Association

Sea Education Association (SEA) www.sea.edu, is an internationally recognized leader in undergraduate ocean education. For more than 40 years and over one million nautical miles sailed, SEA has educated students about the world's oceans through its fully accredited study abroad program, SEA Semester.

SEA/SEA Semester is based on Cape Cod in the oceanographic research community of Woods Hole, Massachusetts and has two research vessels: the SSV *Corwith Cramer*, operating in the Atlantic Ocean, and the SSV *Robert C. Seamans*, operating in the Pacific.

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