

**RETIREMENT OF LINDA C. SCHAFFNER
SCHOOL OF MARINE SCIENCE**

Professor Linda C. Schaffner has been a valued member of the William & Mary community for almost five decades. She arrived at William & Mary (W&M) as a graduate student at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in 1976, completed MA (1981) and PhD (1987) degrees in Marine Science, and joined the VIMS faculty in 1988. In recognition of her scholarly and teaching successes, Professor Schaffner was promoted to Associate Professor in 1998 and Full Professor in 2006. She led the academic program at VIMS as Associate Dean of Academic Studies for 12 years, from 2011 until 2023.

A widely respected marine and estuarine ecologist, Professor Schaffner's interdisciplinary research helped to build a solid understanding of the relationship among benthic organisms, sediment, and flow in marine benthic ecology. Her research program brought in more than \$4M from diverse funding sources including the National Science Foundation, Office of Naval Research, and Environmental Protection Agency.

A role model to many, her excellence has been recognized with awards at the institute, state, and international levels. Professor Schaffner received the Outstanding Teacher Award (VIMS, 1995), the Jefferson Teaching Award (W&M, 2001), the Dean's Prize for Advancement of Women in Marine Science (VIMS, 2005), and the Thomas Jefferson Award (W&M, 2024). Professor Schaffner has also earned accolades beyond W&M. She received the Outstanding Faculty Award (State Council for Higher Education in VA, 2003) and was recognized by her international professional organization with the prestigious Estuarine Research Federation (ERF) Distinguished Service Award (ERF, 2007), which is awarded only once every two years.

Throughout her career, Professor Schaffner has been a champion for students, deeply committed to the transformative power of education and mentorship. She was instrumental in developing VIMS's interdisciplinary curriculum including the core course for graduate students, MSCI 502 "Coastal and Estuarine Processes and Issues," which she designed, coordinated and then taught for nearly ten years. At VIMS, she advised six PhD students and five master's students, but her mentorship extended far beyond these students; for example, she served on advisory committees for fifty VIMS graduate students and mentored > 20 undergraduates as part of VIMS's Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program. Professor Schaffner developed VIMS's NSF – funded REU program, which brings undergraduate students from around the US to VIMS to participate in summer research projects. This program was launched by Professor Schaffner in 1997; and to this day it continues to influence the lives of undergraduates from around the nation. In sum, Professor Schaffner's efforts and talents have enriched the academic programs of literally hundreds of Marine Science students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Students impacted by Professor Schaffner now form a strong network of professionals engaged in coastal and marine science and policy at all levels of academic institutions, government laboratories and agencies, private industry and non-governmental organizations. Her pioneering development of interdisciplinary studies has been used as a model for curriculum building nation-wide.

Professor Schaffner served as Associate Dean of Academic Studies at VIMS from 2011 – 2023. Her leadership resulted in a greater than 100% increase in central funding for graduate student support, increased graduate enrollment and student diversity, the launch of a successful professional (MA) degree, significant increases in professional development opportunities for students, a continuing shift towards truly holistic admissions review, a graduate program ombuds team and support for an on-campus

counseling program for graduate students at VIMS. During this time, she also led the VIMS academic program through two accreditation cycles and an external review. She contributed to W&M college-wide governance as well, serving on Faculty Assembly, the Institutional Change Committee (2016 – 2023) and made significant contributions to the SACSCOC Accreditation efforts through multiple accreditation cycles. More recently, she has turned her efforts toward institutional communications, developing a portal for VIMS faculty and staff that provides a centralized location for essential information.

Professor Schaffner's service to William & Mary has been multifaceted: producing impactful science; educating and mentoring the next generation of scientific leaders; building strong connections across the university and beyond; serving on numerous strategic and administrative committees; and leading one of the largest and most successful graduate programs in coastal and marine sciences in the country.

In summary, Professor Schaffner's dedication and contributions to William & Mary are both unique and remarkable. The Faculty of the Section for Coastal and Ocean Processes at VIMS voted unanimously in support of Professor Schaffner's petition for Emeritus status and for her continued use of institutional resources. We look forward to her continued engagement with VIMS and William & Mary faculty and students.

BE IT RESOLVED, That the William & Mary Board of Visitors acknowledges the retirement of Linda C. Schaffner, expresses its profound appreciation for her many contributions to William & Mary and VIMS over nearly 50 years of service. The Board hereby approves the change in status from Professor of Marine Science to Professor of Marine Science, Emerita.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the Board and a copy of delivered to Professor Schaffner with best wishes from a grateful Board for her years of dedicated service to William & Mary.