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ODU Researchers Lead Team That Secured Department of Defense Offshore Wind Grant

August 24, 2020

Old Dominion University's efforts to be a leader in the development and implementation of offshore wind technology on the Virginia coast are paying dividends for the Commonwealth.

The University has won a \$775,000 grant from the Department of Defense's Office of the Secretary of Veterans and Defense, with partners from the College of William & Mary and James Madison University.

The grant will help create a wind energy siting solution to mitigate the effects of location decision on military training, readiness and research, covering both offshore and onshore wind projects.

Tom Allen, professor of geography, will serve as principal investigator. The effort will be coordinated by Jerry Cronin of ODU's OpenSeas Technology Innovation Hub.

"The grant will combine the University's strong capabilities in wind energy and geographic information systems, along with the entrepreneurial business development expertise of the Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship to create a sustainable solution that extends beyond the life of the grant," Cronin said.

In 2019, Old Dominion University established an offshore wind task force to help align public- and private-sector interests as Dominion Energy Inc. prepares to build a 220-turbine wind farm approximately 27 miles off the Virginia Beach coast. The planned \$7.8 billion megaproject would be the largest offshore wind farm in the country when fully built.

"This award comes at a time when a coordinated approach for all things maritime is more important than ever," Old Dominion President John R. Broderick said. "I am proud of all of our researchers as we balance the economic opportunities of our maritime economy with the realities of national military security and our responsibility to protect our natural resources."



The task force has won a total of \$1.8 million in external funding in the past 12 months.

Paul Olsen, ODU's executive director for programs and partnerships, attended the Commonwealth's offshore wind bill signing ceremony at the Virginia Aquarium in late June, which was followed by a several-hour trip aboard three vessels to tour Dominion Energy's Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind (CVOW) project.

ODU's focus on offshore wind research has opened opportunities for the University apart from the \$1.8 million in grants already received. "We have amazing research faculty to exploit our offshore wind locational advantage we enjoy at ODU," Olsen said.

Olsen said George Hagerman, senior project scientist with ODU's Coastal Center for Physical Oceanography, leads a team of nationally recognized offshore wind project scientists.

"I'm really honored to be working with George Hagerman - he has amazing energy," Olsen said. "His work with Dean Ben Stuart (of the Batten College of Engineering & Technology) has led to powerful collaborations across the University, and the broader community."

Due to the limitations of the COVID-19 virus, only a small group of elected, industry and non-profit officials were able to visit the actual turbines. Olsen was selected to represent ODU because of the University's offshore wind efforts, but also its maritime research.

"Hopefully we can get the entire team out there once this virus lifts," he said.

Olsen, Hagerman and program specialist Rema McManus lead the region's 200-member offshore wind task force, which has representatives from industry, academia, nonprofits and government, with a shared goal of leveraging Virginia's natural geographic and supply chain advantages to become a national leader in offshore wind research and development.