



## URI professor receives mentoring award from Joint Ocean Commission Initiative

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Award recognizes Peter August for instilling a passion for coasts, oceans

KINGSTON, R.I. -- July 20, 2011 – University of Rhode Island Professor Peter August was recognized yesterday by the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative with its 2011 Marc J. Hershman Excellence in Mentoring Award.



August was honored for his commitment to educating, training and inspiring students and young professionals to pursue careers in ocean and coastal science, policy and management. The award was presented July 18 at the Coastal Zone 2011 conference in Chicago by John Podesta, former White House chief of staff, and Norman Mineta, former secretary of transportation and secretary of commerce.

A professor of natural resources science and a resident of Hope Valley, August served as the founding director of the URI Coastal Institute, where he was responsible for developing programs and activities that assisted in the creation of solutions to environmental problems in coastal ecosystems. His mentoring was most evident through his leadership of the Institute's multidisciplinary Ph.D. training program supported by the National Science Foundation, which attracted students from the disciplines of oceanography, economics, business, biology and fisheries.

"Pete is brilliant and generous at providing people with insight, and he does it with people at all levels of engagement," said Judith Swift, who succeeded August as director of the Coastal

Institute and nominated him for the award. "He doesn't usually assume the formal role of mentor; he is just a person who is always willing to support and assist and advise when asked."

August's nomination for the award received 20 outstanding letters of support from colleagues and students. A former student noted that he creates an environment where students can learn, where it was safe to make mistakes, and where they can become strong critical thinkers. He extends his talent to each of the students, providing enormous value to their education and builds a sense of dignity, excellence and peer support.

"What impresses me most about Peter is that whenever students go to see him, they can count on walking out of his office better informed and with more tools to analyze their particular problem," said URI Professor Art Gold. "Pete is a problem solving guy, and he empowers students to solve problems."

Added URI oceanography student Brita Jessen, "Pete is relentless in his efforts to bring together students and faculty in a dynamic and respectful group that can work on issues from climate change to habitat mapping. Then he helps the group move forward with his outstanding humor and wisdom. For me and all the students I've worked with, Pete is an outstanding mentor."

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, a national bipartisan organization working toward ocean policy reform, established the award in memory of Professor Marc J. Hershman, who was a leader in the field of ocean and coastal policy for more than 30 years, and served as a commissioner on the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. A prominent highlight of Professor Hershman's legacy remains his great devotion to mentoring and inspiring young people.

Pictured above

URI Professor Peter August acknowledges receiving the 2011 Marc J. Hershman Award for Excellence in Mentoring from the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative in Chicago this week.