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## 2010-02-22: Three Seas offers immersion in marine research

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## Three Seas offers immersion in marine research



A student in the Three Seas Program examines coral  
Courtesy photo

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For undergraduate students, the opportunity to work side-by-side with leading faculty researchers can be a life-changing experience. So what is it like for students to spend day in and day out, living and working with top researchers for months at a time?

Ask any of the participants of the Three Seas Program at Northeastern. Now in its twenty-sixth year, the program enables students to study and conduct research in three diverse environments with many of the world's leading marine scientists.

Run by the **Marine Science Center (MSC)** at Northeastern University, graduate and undergraduate students spend the fall semester at the MSC in Nahant, Massachusetts. In the winter they

move on to Moorea, French Polynesia for three months, followed by a two-month stint in the spring on San Juan Island, Washington.

"Being located at field stations allows students and instructors to seamlessly move between lecture, lab, and the field— often several times each day," noted Sal Genovese, director of the Three Seas Program. "The live-work environment enables students to develop true collegial relationships with the faculty and immerse themselves in research in ways that are not possible in traditional classroom and laboratory settings."

John Hanmer, a senior biology major who participated in the Three Seas Program last year, said the program "actually shows you what a career in marine science will be like—something that regular classes can't do.

"The work I did with other researchers was invaluable for my future career. Not only did I learn how to best conduct research, we also discussed the steps I needed to take to further my education in marine biology."

Rochelle Devault agreed that the experience was something that could not be captured in a classroom and that the interaction with active researchers throughout the program was integral to its value.

"I have always been interested in marine science, but I was looking to get real experience," said Devault, who graduated this January with a degree in biology. "As an undergraduate, Three Seas provided me with rare opportunities to combine research, lab, and field work."

The program is taught by marine biologists from leading research institutions, including Northeastern University, Brown University, Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and University of California campuses at Berkeley, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz. These scientists have strong, well-funded research programs, and their connection with the Three Seas Program provides students with access to a first-rate network of researchers within the marine science community.

Several researchers from Northeastern who work with the students participated in the program as students themselves, including Genovese and assistant professor of biology Steven Vollmer.

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