Navy, Coast Guard Formalize Partnership Between Naval Postgraduate School and Coast Guard Research and Development Center



A Coast Guard crewmember jettisons a Maritime Object Tracking Technology marker as part of a Coast Guard Research and Development Center technology demonstration on the Thames River, New London, Connecticut, Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018. *U.S. COAST GUARD RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER*

The U.S. Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) and Coast Guard Research and Development Center (RDC) signed a new five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) on April 14, 2021, which facilitates collaboration on joint research that directly supports common defense priorities and Coast Guard statutory missions.

NPS President retired Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau and RDC Commanding Officer Capt. Dan Keane met on a virtual platform to both sign the document that will continue and enhance collaborative research and educational cooperation between the two institutions. The document establishes a framework for future collaboration, joint research and access to capabilities.

“The Tri-Service Maritime Strategy (TSMS), Advantage at Sea, prioritizes developing future capability and capacity for both the Navy and the Coast Guard,” said Rondeau. “Our formalized partnership not only strengthens the strong ties between NPS and the Coast Guard, but it brings to bear our defense-focused faculty and operationally experienced Navy and Coast Guard students in joint projects to develop our future force and support that strategy.”

Keane said partnerships are vital to the RDC portfolio accomplishment strategy, such as with Department of Defense and Department of Energy labs, the Federal Lab Consortium, and academia. “Perhaps one our strongest and most impactful partnerships is with the Naval Postgraduate School,” he said.

“Since an MOU was signed three years ago, the RDC has become a topic sponsor, we have proposed questions related to our portfolio that have turned into academic products; NPS researchers have worked with our researchers on summer studies; and we have provided platforms for NPS experimentation. We believe that we have just scratched the surface and the future is incredibly bright,” said Keane. “The partnership is strong today, and is only going to grow stronger in the future. We are excited about the next five years.”

According to a joint statement about the signing, the MOU will help focus NPS on aspects of the TSMS that chiefly fall to the Coast Guard to define research projects that those students, and NPS faculty, can work on together and advance toward

solving key maritime challenges. “In addition to identifying thesis topics of mutual interest, the MOU includes access and use of each institution’s unique laboratories and facilities, and involves other key research exchanges to mutually advance their mission of research and education for warfighting advantage,” the statement said.

Planning is underway to facilitate joint research projects on such things including renewable energy, additive manufacturing, maritime-domain awareness and wargaming.

There is a small cohort of mid-career Coast Guard officers attending NPS as students, joining the 600 naval officers and 300 Marine Corps officers attending the school.

According to NPS Dean of Research Dr. Jeffery Paduan, NPS has an impressive cadre of subject matter experts. The school offers masters and doctorate programs in 70 different fields of studies with 227 tenure-track faculty and 347 non-tenure track faculty.

Paduan said both NPS and RDC have distinguished histories as leading research institutions. “The Navy and Coast Guard face overlapping challenges at sea, and both of our organizations complement each other in addressing these problems. This MOU will lead to many more joint projects and shared benefits.”

Students will benefit from thesis topics and capstone projects of mutual interest, with access to each institution’s unique laboratories, facilities, expertise and research capabilities at sea and ashore.

Rondeau said the teaming brings opportunities to understand and solve problems, and solidifies a promising “partnership in science, technology, education, learning and teaming – and in the end, winning. This MOU opens up our apertures to possibilities that are in front of us. I truly believe this has power beyond even what we can imagine today.”