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Newsroom

Two Alums Collect Top Marine Fellowship

Kathleen Haber '10 and Christina Hoefsmit '10 receive prestigious Knauss Fellowships to work with the federal government on marine and coastal issues.

Bristol, R.I., June 15, 2010: Recent Roger Williams University School of Law graduates **Kathleen Haber '10** and **Christina Hoefsmit '10** have been awarded one of the nation's most prestigious marine law fellowships, under which they will work in the federal government on marine and coastal issues.



Haber and Hoefsmit are among fewer than 50 nationwide recipients of the 2011 Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship, and are two of only four law graduates selected. Both are completing the [marine affairs joint degree program](#), in which law students simultaneously earn a juris doctor from RWU Law and a master of marine affairs from the University of Rhode Island.

“This is the most prestigious postgraduate placement in national ocean law and policy that you’ll find,” said **Susan Farady**, director of the [Marine Affairs Institute at RWU Law](#) and director of the Rhode Island Sea Grant Legal Program. “It’s also widely known in the field that getting one of these fellowships is a great indicator for future employment. So this is fabulous news for Kate and Christina, and for our program!”

RWU Law’s Knauss fellow placement is among the highest in the country, according to Alan Desbonnet, assistant director of [Rhode Island Sea Grant](#).



“RWU is fast becoming a major element in the Knauss arena,” Desbonnet said. “Four placements [for one state in a single year] is at the upper end of the chart. It is very impressive and certainly shows the high quality of the students that originate from Rhode Island university systems. Joint degree students have always been a mainstay of our Knauss applicants and of those selected to serve.”

Since 2006, three other RWU Law students have been selected as Knauss fellows:

- **Elizabeth Etrie '06** interned as a 2007 fellow with the Office of Marine Conservation, Department of State in its Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.
- **Jennifer Mehaffey '07**, a 2008 fellow, and worked as a Policy Advisor to the Director of the Committee on Marine Transportation System, U.S. Department of Transportation.
- **Nicholas Battista '08** was a 2009 fellow and worked as Sea Grant Fellow for Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-Maine).

On average, Rhode Island receives between two and four Knauss placements per year.



“There is no set number per state,” explained Alan Desbonnet, assistant director of Rhode Island Sea Grant. “It is a competition based on student credentials, and no state has any guarantee of Knauss Fellow placement.”

The [Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship](#), established in 1979, matches highly qualified graduate students interested in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources and in the national policy decisions affecting those resources with hosts in the federal legislative or executive branches of government in Washington, D.C. Named after National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) chief John A. Knauss, the Sea Grant fellowship program was established in 1979 to fulfill one of the objectives of the National Sea Grant College Program Act, stating: “The objective of this title is to increase the understanding, assessment, development, utilization, and conservation of the nation’s ocean and coastal resources by providing assistance to promote a strong educational base.”

The Fellows are sponsored by Rhode Island Sea Grant, located at the University of Rhode Island, and part of NOAA’s National Sea Grant College Program, which promotes the conservation and sustainable development of marine resources for the public benefit.