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77th
CONVOCATION CEREMONY
August 30, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

Processional

Eric Goodchild

Bagpiper

Academic Procession

Debra Dunlop, PhD

Cynthia Burns Martin, MBA

Faculty Marshals

Welcome

Jennifer Militello, PhD

Program Director, MFA in Creative Writing

Opening Remarks

Wayne Lesperance, DLP

President

Board of Trustee Remarks

Lex Scourby, BA '75, MBA

Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Robert A. Kilgore Faculty Award

Geoffrey M. Cook, PhD

Associate Professor Department of Biology and Health Science

Student Government Remarks

Treyjon Lewis '24

Student Government President

Closing

Wayne Lesperance, DLP

President

Recessional

Eric Goodchild

Bagpiper

ROBERT A. KILGORE FACULTY AWARD

Presented to a member of the faculty whose distinguished service to the teaching profession is recognized by students, staff, and fellow faculty members.

2023 HONOREE

GEOFFREY M. COOK, PhD

Associate Professor Department of Biology and Health Science



Geoff Cook earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Virginia Tech and a Master of Science and Ph.D. in Environmental Science and Policy from George Mason University. After completing his graduate studies, Geoff participated in three post-doctoral appointments that enabled him to study walrus and salmonid populations in Alaska; deep-sea coral reefs in the Northeast Atlantic; coral community and sea cucumber population dynamics in the Florida Keys; and circadian rhythms in nudibranchs while serving as a NH-INBRE teaching scholar at New England College. He has been conducting research on coral reefs and other marine ecosystems for over 20 years, operating in all Earth's oceans except the Southern Ocean. These scientific opportunities, as well as having worked as a professional SCUBA instructor and international field guide for the past 24 years, have enabled Geoff to accrue >4,500 logged SCUBA dives—1,000 of which were scientific dives. This amounts to Dr. Cook having spent more than 5,000 hours underwater.

Currently, students in Geoff's laboratory at NEC are growing reef-building corals to 1) identify novel therapeutic compounds as candidates for drug development to help combat the global rise of antibiotic-resistant bacteria presently threatening human health; 2) explore novel strategies for the conservation of coral reefs; and 3) investigate the role of innate immunity in regulating the structure and function of an organism's associated microbiome.

CONVOCATION

NEC celebrates the start of each academic year with an Academic Convocation ceremony, which represents many new beginnings—new academic pursuits, new friendships, and new opportunities for students to grow as leaders and civically engaged citizens. The ceremony also welcomes first-year students as the newest members of NEC.