

Project Title: Partnership with the University of Washington's School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences to Enhance Teaching and Research Capacity **\$92.0K**

Alaska Fisheries Science Center

Principal Investigators: Jennifer Ferdinand

Industry Co-Principal Investigators:

University of Washington (UW) School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences (SAFS): This school of about 125 graduate and 100 undergraduate students encompasses programs in basic and applied aquatic sciences with an emphasis on fisheries management and aquatic resource conservation.

Background and Justification:

In 2006, Congress asked the Departments of Commerce and Education to examine the stock assessment science workforce and conduct supply and demand studies to determine if a shortage of stock assessment scientists was imminent. In September 2008, the Departments of Commerce and Education issued the report "*The Shortage in the Number of Individuals with Post-Baccalaureate Degrees in Subjects Related to Fishery Science.*" The report found that the demand for stock assessment scientists exceeded the supply and will result in an anticipated shortage of 2-18 qualified stock assessment scientists per year, cumulatively amounting to a shortage of 20-180 stock assessment scientists over the next decade. The key recommendations the report issued to address the shortage were to: 1) Increase number of faculty in the field of stock assessment science; 2) Increase graduate students and post-doctoral associate numbers in the field of stock assessment science; and 3) Improve the quality of incoming graduate students (in the quantitative disciplines).

In response to that shortage report, the AFSC and the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) partnered with the UW SAFS to invest in faculty with expertise in quantitative ecology to increase the pool of students interested in stock assessment jobs with NMFS.

Methodology:

Together, the AFSC and the NWFSC provide funding for two positions: an assistant professor in population dynamics and an associate professor for a fisheries economist. Together, these faculty help prepare the next generation of policy-interested biologists capable of developing new analytical methods to provide better stock assessments and to evaluate fishery management strategies.

Linkage to MSRA priority areas:

Increasing the number of qualified assessment scientists produced by academia directly addresses the MSRA priority of improving science. The recent addition of a fisheries economist position in this endeavor addresses the priority of increasing market-based management programs.

Performance Indicators and Deliverables

- May 2013 – Fund faculty positions through an existing grant
- Funded faculty teach 4-6 graduate classes/year to address NMFS' need for qualified stock assessment scientist; mentor/advise graduate students; collaborate directly with the AFSC on specified research projects