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URI and NUWC line up 19 partners and \$1.5M for Center of Excellence

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PROVIDENCE – Gov. Donald L. Carcieri, U.S. Sen. Jack Reed and U.S. Representatives Patrick J. Kennedy and James R. Langevin joined University of Rhode Island and Naval Undersea Warfare Center officials today in the governor's office to announce details of the planned Center of Excellence in Undersea Technology.

The center will be established at URI's Narragansett Bay campus, under a competitively-awarded contract with NUWC that

includes \$150,000 in seed money. About \$1.5 million in funding already has been committed by various sources, and another \$1.5 million in proposals has been submitted, according to URI spokesman Todd McLeish.

CoEUT, as it is being called, will serve as an umbrella organization for researchers from the NUWC, Division Newport, URI and other universities, and



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MALCOLM L. SPAULDING, a URI professor of ocean engineering, will serve as CoEUT's director.

the marine industry. Its goal is to develop technologies to address homeland security issues, then explore possible civilian applications, or vice versa.

For example, said Malcolm L. Spaulding, a URI professor of ocean engineering who has been named to direct the center, the autonomous underwater vehicles used by oceanographers to measure the salinity, temperature and turbulence of ocean-water columns might be outfitted with new sensors for military purposes. “If you took that same platform and put on a sensor that could detect TNT in the water, you would have yourself something that would be very useful for tracking and finding mines,” he said.

CoEUT might lead to new technologies to protect the environment, study declining fish populations and track their migration, manage crises resulting from tropical storms and guard against terrorist attacks, Spaulding said.

More than a dozen other university and industry partners will join URI and NUWC at the center, the officials said. The academic partners include the University of Southern California, North Carolina A&T State University, the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth and UMass-Boston, the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Industry partners include General Dynamics’ Electric Boat, Raytheon IDS, SAIC, ARA, ASC, Eminent, Ocean Server, Rite Solutions Applied Science Associates, SubChem Systems, WetLab, Far Sounder and United Technology Research Center.

The center will be good news for the Rhode Island economy, because it will help the state build a highly trained work force for both NUWC and the local defense industry, said Saul Kaplan, executive director of the Rhode Island Economic Development.

For additional information, visit www.uri.edu or read the April 9-15 issue of the Providence Business News.