

U.S. Coast Guard, International Delegations, Experts Discuss Best Practices

As Arctic ice retreats and ship traffic increases through the narrow Bering Strait, the US and Russia are increasingly focused on managing this emerging maritime chokepoint. What lessons might be learned from other regions of the globe? To answer this, the US Coast Guard recently partnered with Bowdoin College and WWF to convene an expert group of scholars and international officials to discuss best practices in maritime governance. The workshop included official delegations from the governments of Russia, Japan, Indonesia, Argentina, and Chile, along with leading national and international scholars and advocates.

“This meeting was a real opportunity to learn from our counterparts who have experience with the challenge of managing shared straits and waterways,” explained Mike Emerson, the Coast Guard’s Director of Maritime Systems, “as well as tap into the work of the academic community, on issues like coastal planning and protected areas.” The workshop, titled “Governing Across the Waves”, was also a unique collaborative effort between the Coast Guard and nongovernmental partners that offered learning opportunities for both. “I was a bit overwhelmed,” said Coast Guard Academy cadet Cory Murallo, explaining the complexity of maritime policy topics addressed, which included “conflict, response and prevention efforts, climate change, and much more.” Cadet Lucy Dagher echoed this sentiment: “It was incredible to be in the room,” she noted, adding that the workshop “opened my eyes to the possibility of international collaboration in the search for creative problem solving and policy implementation.”

The meeting, held on the Bowdoin campus in Brunswick, Maine, was a joint effort by the Coast Guard’s Office of Marine Transportation Systems, the Coast Guard Academy, and the Center for Arctic Study and Policy (CASP), with Bowdoin’s Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum, WWF, the Arctic Domain Awareness Center at the University of Alaska, and the Oak Foundation, along with support from NSF.



Workshop participants at the Governing Across the Waves event. Coast Guard Academy cadet Kyle Phillips is at the far left, and cadet Lucy Dagher is center, front row. Photo by Rachel Perron, CASP.