NOMINATION SIGNATURE PAGE

2025 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

Nominations must include this as the cover page of the nomination package PDF submission

Name of Applicant:	Peter Berquist
Institution:	Virginia Peninsula Community College
Category (choose only one): • Baccalaureate Institution • Masters/Comprehensive Institution • Research/Doctoral Institution • Two-Year Institution • Rising Star	Two-Year Institution
Signature of President or Chief Academic Officer:	Towuanna Porter Brannon, President
Printed Name of President or Chief Academic Officer:	Towuanna Porter Brannon
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MISSION STATEMENT

Virginia Peninsula Community College

We change lives and transform our community through diverse, inclusive, and equitable education and workforce training, excellent support and services, and innovative partnerships.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Professor Peter Berquist is an outstanding and versatile teacher who has engaged in educational and scientific research throughout his career. A leader in the geoscience education community, he has developed open-access interdisciplinary curriculum materials and led numerous workshops on evidence-based practices for supporting student success and facilitating students' career and workforce development. His research has engaged students with practical applications of geology and drone work. He has also made significant service contributions to Virginia Peninsula Community College (VPCC), the community, and the geoscience discipline.

After two years teaching at College of the Atlantic and as an Education Ranger at Acadia National Park, he began his full-time teaching career in 2007 at Thomas Nelson Community College (which became VPCC in 2022). Hired to lead the geology program at VPCC, Berquist expanded the program across two campuses and has served as Chair of three robust academic and transfer programs: Geology Department, Science Program, and Unmanned Systems Program ("drone"). He has engaged students and faculty at VPCC, across the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), and nationally, offering local to international field experiences, developing student research opportunities not commonly available at two-year colleges, and creating innovative interdisciplinary teaching resources. Berquist's significant contributions include procuring and overseeing all aspects of VPCC's Oceanographic Research Vessel (the R/V *Investigator*) used to support field-based geology course content; integrating applied and interdisciplinary teaching practices; and teaching across several VPCC programs (Geology, Natural Sciences, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and Unmanned Systems).

TEACHING Professor Berquist is a dynamic instructor who teaches a wide range of courses across several disciplines at VPCC including Physical and Historical Geology, Geographic Information Systems, Applied Research Methods, Manual and Autonomous Drone Flight, and Drone Maintenance and Repair courses. Early in his career, Berquist and colleague Callan Bentley (then from NOVA-Annandale) developed one of only a few field-intensive courses in the country targeted to community college students. From 2009-2014 they taught two-week summer field courses across the Northern Rocky Mountains in Montana, Wyoming, Alberta, and British Columbia, inspiring a generation of geoscientists. Former student Katie Hurtado reflects, "*In just two weeks in WY and MT, I gained more knowledge and insight than I did during the entire time I spent earning my Bachelor's degree. Pete's approach to teaching outdoors greatly influenced my own methods. As a teacher myself, I strive to give my students the same hands-on, outdoor experience that I hope will become joyful memories for them."* Berquist has also taught a field-based graduate course and weekend-long field trips on the geology of Virginia for K-12 teachers through the MathScience Innovation Center in Richmond.

Berquist's lecture and lab courses promote student engagement and participation and incorporate field-based learning opportunities where students learn through doing. His students gain critical thinking skills, make connections between course content and their communities, and develop professional skills. As one former student (Kayla Cahoon, now a PhD candidate at Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)) wrote, "*Pete's teaching style was enthralling: he incorporated storytelling, observational and experiential learning, and exercises in critical thinking to impart that Earth is a dynamic system and one can read the history of that change through geological features*." Dr. Chuck Bailey, Chair and Professor of Geology at William & Mary (W&M) remarks *"Professor Berquist is a spectacular teacher and mentor. We relish transfer students from VPCC who've taken courses with him as they come well-prepared and ready to engage."*

At VPCC, Berquist and his colleagues incorporate field-based research experiences in each geology course, including online and asynchronous classes. These experiences provide students with a rich and meaningful application of course content and help them develop greater familiarity with their surroundings. Students remark that these approaches to teaching resulted in some of their best experiences at VPCC, drew them into the geosciences, and helped them learn complex topics. Former student Emma Hicks wrote "*[Berquist] had a unique ability to make each student feel valued and encouraged. [He] created an environment where there were no wrong questions. His encouragement and support were instrumental in helping me develop confidence and a passion for geology. His influence continues to inspire me in my academic and professional pursuits. His innovative teaching methods and genuine care for his students make him an extraordinary educator who truly has made a difference in my life."*

Initially, in 2007, Berquist's main teaching efforts focused on in-person and online geology courses. In 2015, he expanded his course offerings by co-developing a new research methods capstone course for the Science Program with colleague Dr. Jennifer Martin (Biology). Their students gained valuable experience in the field, developing research projects, presenting research, and attending professional conferences, all prior to transferring to four-year universities.

In 2018, Berquist's scope expanded yet again, as he developed the Unmanned Systems (UMS, "drone") program at the Historic Triangle campus and offered courses in which students learn to operate drones safely, professionally, and within local, state, and federal regulations. As the program "took off," he further expanded the course offerings to include an advanced autonomous & mapping course and a maintenance/repair course. Berquist's drone courses embedded his signature engaging teaching style and emphasis on hands-on, project-based learning. His students have secured jobs in the drone industry and affirm these courses left them well-prepared and with competitive advantages among their peers. Mark McAlpine, a former student, said *"Berquist's knowledge, experience, teaching style, and dedication to his students ensured my success in the program. The knowledge and skills I learned enabled me to obtain a job as the Director of Safety and Operations for an aviation company where I started a flight training program to teach interns and other employees to fly drones to collect flight data supporting drone research programs for NASA and advanced air mobility research programs."* Berquist has also combined his professional geologic mapping experience, along with advanced training and course work in Geographic Information Systems, to offer GIS courses to students at VPCC and across the VCCS.

One of Berquist's most significant contributions is his work with VPCC's Oceanographic Research Vessel, the R/V *Investigator*, a platform to enhance student learning that has supported research projects for over 400 students since its christening in 2017. Berquist and Terry Wagner (VPCC Grants Program Manager) secured over $30,000 of external funding to purchase and equip this 24-foot boat. Used primarily with the Geology Department's Oceanography classes, the vessel is an invaluable asset for student learning in all departmental courses, including local high schools enrolled through Dual Enrollment. This is a unique and impactful experience – currently no other VCCS institution has a research vessel available exclusively for student use. Berquist is responsible for all aspects of vessel operations, drawing on decades of personal and professional experience on the water.

DISCOVERY Berquist actively engaged in educational and scientific research throughout his career, even though teaching is the primary expectation and responsibility of two-year college (2YC) faculty. His commitment to research is reflected by his publication history (see CV).

Publishing and presenting at professional conferences is not expected for 2YC faculty. Berquist is active in both realms. Another reflection of Berquist's extensive research experience is seen by his involvement (as Senior Personnel, Contractor, and Participant) in seven National Science Foundation grants, ranging from expanding drone and GIS education, developing educational resources, conducting paleoclimate research, and supporting underrepresented STEM students. Since 2021, he has been included on the leadership team of GIS and drone faculty from across Virginia (including the Virginia Space Grant Consortium) pursuing multi-year grant funded projects preparing educators from across the Commonwealth to incorporate drones into their secondary school curriculum.

In 2018, Berquist began a collaboration with Dr. Nick Balascio, a paleoclimate-focused geologist from William & Mary (W&M), bringing his Historical Geology students to the W&M Paleoclimate lab to use specialized equipment in support of course-based research projects. Berquist and Balascio developed a paid research internship for VPCC students and designed a series of research projects focused on Queen Creek and Queens Lake within Williamsburg. Stemming from this work, Dr. Balascio invited Berquist to participate in a project at the University of Bergen (Norway) investigating sediment cores extracted from Northern Greenland. Integrating students into all aspects of this research was a primary focus and Berquist's students gained experience with field and lab work, analyzing data, and presenting at professional conferences. From former student Meara Carlin (GIS Fellow at the W&M Center for Geospatial Analysis), "*His passion for teaching includes passing on his workforce and academic experiences while also opening doors for his own students to gain more experience. I was lucky to work with him on a paleoclimate research project focusing on Queens Lake. I gained field and lab experience, and the project opened doors for me to continue my education at a four-year university."*

KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION Professor Berquist is recognized nationally within the geoscience education community for writing creative, interdisciplinary content based on high-impact teaching methods. In 2015 he was selected to participate in a prestigious $10 million NSF grant *(InTeGrate: Interdisciplinary Teaching of Geoscience for a Sustainable Future)*. As a member of an interinstitutional team, he developed teaching materials exploring climate change, energy resources, and human impacts. Berquist authored modules addressing misconceptions about climate change and evaluating proposals to mitigate the impacts of CO_2 emissions. These are recognized within the National Association of Geoscience Teachers (NAGT) "Exemplary Collection of Teaching Materials." Colleague and former President of the NAGT Geo2YC division, Becca Walker said, *"Pete's work in developing the Carbon, Climate, and Energy Resources suite of teaching materials was a major contribution to the geoscience education community, and I have benefited tremendously from these materials in my teaching, along with thousands of other faculty users from 4-year universities, 2-year colleges, and K-12 schools around the country."* Stemming from this project, Pete was invited by Professor Rowan Lockwood (W&M) to develop engaging activities using the Paleobiology Database, an online repository fossil occurrences. His resources from this project were again recognized within the NAGT Exemplary Collection. Berquist has incorporated all of these resources into the VPCC geology curriculum and shared with colleagues from VPCC, the VCCS, and in national professional conferences and publications. His contributions are available via https://serc.carleton.edu/person/3646.html.

In 2013 Berquist was invited to participate in the *Supporting and Advancing Geoscience Education at Two-Year Colleges: Faculty as Change Agents* (SAGE 2YC) project. This project, funded by grants from the National Science Foundation, engaged 2YC geoscience faculty teams from across the nation in work that focused on supporting the success of all students and their professional pathways. Berquist, along with Lynsey LeMay (VPCC) and Dr. Karen Layou

(Reynolds Community College), formed the Virginia team, which supported geoscience students and faculty within the Mid-Atlantic region over the span of eight years, offering nine professional development workshops and incorporating innovative teaching practices and data-driven course-, programmatic-, and institutional-level initiatives to ultimately improve the success of all students. One of the Project Leaders, Dr. Eric Baer, wrote, *"Pete is a leader in geoscience education not just at VPCC or in Virginia, but nationally. As a pioneering Change Agent in the SAGE 2YC project, he supported faculty across the country to improve geoscience programs*."

Berquist's integration of teaching and research is reflected in the wide range of course-based research he has incorporated into Geology and drone courses at VPCC. These projects provide meaningful and real-world applications of course content; many also support the community. His geology students have collected data for VIMS researchers investigating the impacts of climate change on oysters in the Chesapeake Bay. Berquist has facilitated scores of projects in which drone students honed their professional skills by providing useful data to businesses, government agencies, and local organizations, including: farms (Sweethaven Lavender and Dayspring), homeowners (performing residential solar panel inspections), construction and mining companies (documenting progress), capturing promotional imagery (Kingsmill Resorts, Holly Fork Farm) and documenting restoration efforts (National Fish and Wildlife Service). Two particularly interesting projects enabled students to assist archeologists and landowners from two historic properties in Virginia (Westover and Mill Bank) to better understand the stories of 17th and 18th century enslaved people. From landowner Andrea Erda "*Pete brings his students to our home, Historic Westover, to teach them not only how to fly drones, but also to show them real world applications. Pete and his students have used drone images to create detailed pictures for us as we search beneath the surface to find evidence of enslaved quarters from the 18th century as well as remains from 17th century structures. This is useful to us as we, and other historians, work to expand our narrative and unravel a complex human story"*

SERVICE Berquist has an extensive record of service to VPCC, the local community, state, and his disciplines. He has contributed to numerous committees at VPCC and with national organizations focused on advancing geoscience education – see CV for additional details.

In 2020 Berquist engaged the Geology faculty in a semester-long working group (a pod) as part of a national project, *Unlearning Racism in Geoscience*. The VPCC Pod spent the semester learning about experiences from underrepresented populations and evaluating personal, programmatic, and institutional efforts and barriers to engaging marginalized populations. For this work, Berquist received the VPCC Faculty Focus award for Diversity Awareness, Inclusivity, and Multicultural Enrichment in 2021.

Within the community, Berquist taught geology for several cohorts of local Virginia Master Naturalists (2012-2016), participated in multiple career days at local K-12 schools, and was invited as the Keynote speaker for the W&M Center for Geospatial Analysis GeoData Expo (2024). He has chaired technical sessions at regional and national Geological Society of America meetings and served in leadership positions in the National Association of Geoscience Teachers. Berquist remains an active member of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, serving the community as an operational Coxswain conducting marine search and rescue operations & maritime observation patrols, and teaching state-sanctioned boater safety classes. He is also distinguished nationally as one of few civilians to earn the short-range UAS Pilot Qualification from the United States Coast Guard.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

Geology is sometimes a messy job, so to understand why I revel in engaging students with pulling meter-long muddy sediment cores out of the earth or spending days without running water, you have to go back to my dad's dirty, clanky pick-up truck. I spent days off from school there, peering out the window and sometimes sleeping on the floorboards. I was in elementary school, accompanying my dad to work. He was a geologist and, just to get it out of the way – no, he never pushed or persuaded me into the profession. But he was excellent at entertaining my questions of "how?" and "why?". In hindsight, these were the early vestiges of becoming a geoscientist myself. I loved observing the landscape and trying to understand how certain landforms – river valleys, dunes, meandering streams, and mountains – came to be. Everyone loves a good mystery, and the mystery of those simple questions – how? and why? – planted seeds still germinating today.

The simplicity and power of such basic questions reflect one of my overarching teaching approaches – using basic observations to make sense of complex topics. All too often, students identify themselves as "not good at science" and I vigorously disagree. I share that no matter your background, you can always make observations. On 'Day One' in my classes, students find themselves introduced to, and becoming familiar with, a cup of sand or a seemingly "dumb old rock". Encouraging students to make increasingly detailed observations helps break perceived barriers, because these basic observations are exactly how science works. Anyone can do it. If you just sit and look at a pile of rocks, it's a terribly boring exercise; but if you allow your mindset to shift to a more inquisitive approach, even sand comes alive.

As a college student, I often felt out of place and overwhelmed in the traditional classroom setting. My classmates all had higher GPAs, SAT scores, and much better study habits than I did. But I had a familiarity with the outdoors, a penchant for self-sufficiency, and a truly insatiable curiosity. This led me to fieldwork, which became my hook to the geosciences and my lifeline to persevere through a challenging college path.

I am a field geologist by training, meaning that the bulk of my research and professional experiences come from working outside. I focus on sediments, minerals, landforms, and fossils and use observations from these objects as the foundation for more sophisticated questions and explanations. As an undergraduate student, field intensive courses helped me "see the forest AND the trees"; I saw details we learned about in class alongside the bigger-picture context, in real life. It was a powerful experience, seeing firsthand what I'd been studying. That is why I am compelled – and have dedicated nearly two decades – to a field-based teaching approach. I understand that for many of my students, fieldwork may "not be their thing" since they "don't do outdoors" – quoting common student expressions at the start of a semester. Despite the perceived barriers, these reluctant students commonly leave the semester with opened eyes and a sense of accomplishment, having been challenged in a nurturing way. The positive impact these students feel underscores the pervasive impact of field-based teaching.

Following Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, we cannot expect students to effectively learn if they are concerned about basic factors like safety and comfort. I prioritize creating safe learning environments, drawing on diverse life experiences – serving as a teaching assistant for rock climbing, whitewater kayaking and sailing courses at William & Mary; conducting Search & Rescue missions with the National Park Service and United States Coast Guard; facilitating hundreds of people on ropes/challenge courses in Virginia, Maine, and New Mexico; and teaching/conducting research in the field over decades – all for the primary goal of enabling deep learning and personal growth for my students. Some of my most vivid memories of the VPCC Oceanographic Research Vessel, the R/V *Investigator*, stem from students overcoming

significant fears of being on or near the water. The empowerment they gain is palpable. Their time learning and being challenged outside the classroom are significant experiences that students will draw on throughout their lives. This type and degree of personal growth adds richness to my teaching and the personal narratives of my students.

Fieldwork also beautifully models the process of science for students. We make the most basic observations – about colors and features – and then we create plausible explanations. These tie into a bigger picture that begins to unravel sequences of events, which permits us to ask new questions and inspire more testable ideas. This requires more (and deeper) observations. And the cycle continues. Approaching the process of science from this perspective, I find, is incredibly engaging. My students' feedback reveals that my field-based approach to teaching attracts them into the realm of geosciences and engages the ones who earlier self-identified as "not good at science". I love the opportunity to highlight and clarify gross misconceptions of what science is and isn't, and what it can and can't do.

The same hands-on, impactful approach I employ in courses for college students also translates to every teaching avenue I pursue. Whether working with K-12 teachers interested in enhancing their knowledge of Virginia's geology, college/university faculty exploring how to incorporate active learning strategies to their geoscience programs, or students in my drone courses flying missions to collect data, I provide opportunities to learn through doing. Especially in my drone classes, students engage in service-based projects to develop their flight, risk management, and project management skills and share findings with others external to the college who can benefit from otherwise out-of-reach drone work. Students highly regard these experiences to fly off-campus and participate in real-world projects. A tangible vision of how their skills may be applied in a new career comes into focus and motivates them to strive for excellence.

I love the excitement of discovery through research and sharing this with students because of the personal, intellectual and professional gains it provides. All too often, 2YC students don't have the opportunity to engage in meaningful research until they transfer to a 4YC environment. By crafting research experiences for students at VPCC, I have been able to create opportunities for them to discover a passion for science, gain a competitive edge among their 4YC peers, and establish a foundation for future academic and professional pursuits. I also love hearing students realize they "are just as smart as those 4YC students", bolstering their confidence and eradicating impacts of imposter syndrome - a common barrier to successful transfer of 2YC students to 4YC settings.

Today, I'm still driving some of the same roads I traveled as a kid. Now I have my own dirty, clanky truck, and I wonder about some of the same questions. What's different now is that I bring students along for the discovery process, and I strive to model curiosity-driven inquiry and share with them my joy of learning. The focus isn't just finding answers. It includes giving students the opportunity to ask those basic "how?" and "why?" questions and delight in learning about themselves and their surroundings. Or, as Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman wrote, to discover "The Pleasure of Finding Things Out." For me, it's not just about teaching facts - it's about opening minds to interconnected processes and facilitating growth. And it's what I love every day about teaching and mentoring students.

ABBREVIATED CURRICULUM VITAE

Peter Jon Berquist

EDUCATION:

- **Master of Science in Geology,** August 2005, *Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN*
- **Bachelor of Science in Geology**, May 2001, *William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA*

TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

- **Assistant Professor of Geology (2007-current) and Unmanned Systems (2023-current) -** *Virginia Peninsula Community College.* **Courses taught:**
  - Physical Geology (GOL 105) lecture & laboratory
  - Historical Geology (GOL 106) lecture & laboratory
  - Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems I & II (UMS 111, 211)
  - Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems Components & Maintenance (UMS 177)
  - Geographical Information Systems I (GIS 200) lecture & laboratory
  - Design and Application of Scientific Research (NAS 206)
  - Coordinated Internship for Design and Application of Scientific Research (NAS 290)
- **Co-instructor -** *Northern Virginia Community College-Annandale* –GOL 295, 4-credit field-course in Montana & Wyoming (2009, -10, -11, -13), Alberta & British Columbia, Canada (2012, -14)
- **Adjunct Professor -***William & Mary* (summer 2009) – Developed & taught a graduate-level field course on the geology of Virginia for K-12 educators.

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP & SERVICE:

- **Geology Department Chair (2007-current), Science Program Chair (2019-2023), and Unmanned Systems Program Chair (2023-current)**
- **Operator of Oceanographic Research Vessel R/V INVESTIGATOR (2017-current) -** Oversee all aspects of vessel operations for research, supporting more than 400 VPCC students, including Dual Enrollment. Supported research with Chesapeake Scientific, W&M Paleontology, Virginia Dept. of Geology & Mineral Resources, and VCU's Rice River Center.
- **SAGE 2YC Change Agent** (2013-2021) in the *Supporting and Advancing Geoscience Education in Two-Year College: Faculty as Change Agents* (SAGE 2YC) professional development program.
- **Leadership Team Personnel** for UAS teacher training workshops through Virginia Tech and the Virginia Space Grant Consortium: *Geospatial Technician Education – Uncrewed Aircraft Systems* (GeoTED-UAS) (2021-23); *Virginia Pilot Pathways for High School Educators* (2022); *An Experiential and Data-driven Approach to Agricultural Education* (ADVANCE) Program (2024-26).
- **National Association of Geoscience Teachers**
  - **Traveling Workshop Program team leader** (2017-2020) - Facilitated workshops to improve department efficiency and student success to geoscience programs.
  - **Geo2YC Executive Board Member (Archivist) -** (2018-2020; 2023-2025)
  - **Outstanding Adjunct Award Board Member -** (2017-2020)
  - **Executive Director Search Committee member 2YC Representative -** (2020)

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS ORGANIZED AND PRESENTED:

<u>LOCAL</u>

- **K-5 Educator Professional Development in Coastal Science** COVA-STEM Grant (2024)
- **VPCC Faculty Colloquium & Center for Teaching and Learning**
  - Preparing students for the professional and academic worlds: advice from employers that spans all disciplines (2019)
  - 5E model for Effective Teaching (2020), "Just in Time Teaching" strategies (2020)

STATE & REGIONAL

- **SAGE 2YC workshops** offered to VCCS and geoscience faculty regionally focused on supporting geoscience students through evidence-based practices:
  - Supporting the Whole Student: Strategies for Success in the Classroom, Transferring, and Finding Professional Opportunities (2014)
  - Supporting Student Success for Underprepared 2-Year College Students and Students with Disabilities (2015)

NATIONAL

- **National Association of Geoscience Teachers Sponsored**
  - Engaging Students in Understanding the Earth System with Key Societal Issues (2018)
  - Energy Education for Undergraduate Programs (2019)

AWARDS:

- VPCC *Spirit of Thomas Nelson Award for Professional Excellence in Teaching* (2018), *Faculty Focus Award for Diversity Awareness, Inclusivity, and Multicultural Enrichment* (2021), *Special Recognition Award* for publication of Rosas et al (2022; see below)
- Awarded $33,000 for purchase of an Oceanographic Research Vessel for VPCC, through Dominion Energy and Langley Federal Credit Union (2016)
- Awarded five Professional Development/Innovator Grants through Virginia Peninsula Community College Education Foundation (2009,-10, -16, -19, -22), ~$20,000 total
- Dottie Stout Professional Development Grant Award from the National Association of Geoscience Teachers (2011)
- Co-author on 3 Virginia Community College Workshop Grants (2008, 2 in 2012), total $4,500 (supported Wilderness First Aid training for faculty)

PUBLICATIONS:

- **Co-author** for National Science Foundation-funded InTeGrate Project Module – developed interdisciplinary teaching materials on climate change (2016). Awarded "Exemplary Teaching Material" by the National Association of Geoscience Teachers.
- **Primary/co-author** on six peer-reviewed Articles, three geologic maps, one field trip guidebook and 32 abstracts. Example publications below: *(* denotes student author*)

Rosas Alquicira, E. F., Guertin, L., Tvelia, S., **Berquist, P. J**., & Cole, M. W. (2022). Undergraduate research at community Colleges: A pathway to achieve student, faculty, and institutional success. In E. M. D. Baer, K. M. Layou, & R. H. Macdonald (Eds.), *Catalyzing change: STEM faculty as change agents. New Directions for Community Colleges*, *199*, pp. 63– 75. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20524

Berquist, Peter J., *Carlin, Meara, *Price, Zachary, Balascio, Nicholas L., *Arthur, Robert and Kaste, James M., (2020). Sedimentary history of Queens Lake, Williamsburg, Virginia: Connecting lacustrine and estuarine systems within the Virginia Coastal Plain. Geological Society of America, Joint 69th Annual Southeastern / 55th Annual Northeastern Section Meeting. Session No. 56, T3. Paleolimnological Records of Climate and Environmental Change https://doi.org/10.1130/abs/2020SE-344862

SELECTED INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE/COMMITTEES:

- Curriculum & Instruction Committee member (2013-2014)
- Faculty Colloquium on Excellence and Innovation member (2013-2017)
- VPCC Education Foundation Innovator Grant Review Panel (2013-current)
- Hiring Committee Chair for two full-time faculty and member for three full-time faculty

LETTERS OF SUPPORT (Excerpted)

Sarah Overmeyer, former VPCC Student: Mr. Berquist was more than just a professor; he was a mentor who helped me discover my potential. Our two week field course not only deepened my understanding of geology but also taught me to embrace my dyslexia as a strength. Thanks to his guidance and support, I've been able to achieve success in my government job for over eight years. His belief in my abilities and his innovative teaching methods have equipped me with the tools and confidence to excel.

Jeffery Rollins, former VPCC student: Pete's encouragement gave me the confidence to try and become the best student I could. I never thought I had what it takes to graduate with a degree in science, let alone be a professional scientist. Without his reinforcement, I wouldn't have graduated from ODU w/ honors or have a successful career as an environmental scientist.

Jennifer Connell, former VPCC student, VIMS lab manager: His enthusiasm for geology is inspiring and contagious, and it is the reason I chose to pursue a degree and career in geology. His effectiveness as a mentor and professor is exemplified by the ever-growing group of students and early-career professionals that credit him with inspiring their trajectory in the field.

Terri Osner, Student, Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS), VPCC, LCDR, Medical Service Corps, USN-Ret: Berquist's unique teaching style immediately captivated student attention, with constant interaction and real-world expectations. I witnessed his flawless ability to instruct age groups from 17 to 70+ and with varying skill sets. His knowledge, patience, energy, humor, and humbleness provide for an exceptionally engaging learning environment.

Dr. Jennifer Martin, Ph.D, Professor of Biology, VPCC, 2018 SCHEV OFA Recipient: The most impactful, memorable and enjoyable courses and projects during my tenure at VPCC have been those in collaboration with Pete Berquist. For the last 15+ years, we have worked with students on everything from boats to barrier islands, in local science labs to international science conferences. We have co-taught research courses and field labs and have spearheaded professional development workshops for K-5 teachers. What has made these experiences so powerful for me, and, most importantly for students, is Pete's passion for science and his enthusiasm for sharing that knowledge. Whether, formally, with students and colleagues, or informally, with bystanders at a boat ramp, Pete's excitement for science is incredibly infectious. Pete makes science relatable, accessible and just a ton of muddy, dirty, rocky, 'fossily' fun! He turns students into scientists, and scientists and educators, such as me, into better, more curious students. I am incredibly grateful to have Pete as my colleague (and my teacher). More so, I am thankful that so many students have been able/will continue to experience and benefit from his high impact, high caliber teaching style. Pete is the embodiment of Outstanding Faculty and I cannot think of any colleague more deserving of this award.

Callan Bentley, Associate Professor of Geology, Piedmont Virginia Community College, 2015 SCHEV OFA Recipient I've led a lot of students on a lot of field trips. There's no person on this planet who I'd rather have as a co-instructor than Pete Berquist. Pete is someone I see as wholly reliable, eminently trustworthy, proactive, thoughtful and caring. Our years teaching together have been the font of the very finest memories – both for our students and for me.

Dr. Heather Macdonald, Chancellor Professor of Geology, Emerita, W&M, 2003 SCHEV OFA Recipient. In addition to his talents as a teacher, he is a thoughtful, visionary leader. As a SAGE 2YC Change Agent, he led numerous workshops with the Virginia Change Agent team on an impressive range of topics for faculty colleagues. He is recognized nationally for his work

on supporting student research and has a remarkable ability to initiate collaborations that enrich student learning in and beyond the classroom.

John McGee, PhD, Professor and Geospatial Extension Specialist, Department of Forest Resources & Environmental Conservation, Virginia Tech: Mr. Berquist is an educational innovator. He provides experiential learning and student service-learning opportunities in the community to better prepare students for the employment opportunities that will fuel Virginia's future economy. His impact on education across the Commonwealth is significant.

Lynsey LeMay, Geology Instructor, Coordinator VPCC Center for Teaching and Learning: Pete has always been a leader among his peers, championing efforts to better support students, and supporting his colleagues to do the same. Pete's ability to connect with people, his strong work ethic, his forward-thinking approaches, and his dedication to education are admirable, and I'm privileged to be his colleague.

Dr. Nicholas Balascio, Associate Professor of Geology, W&M, 2020 SCHEV OFA Rising Star Recipient Berquist's dedication to teaching and student engagement reflects the mission of the college and directly impacts our local community. His record is exceptional because of the range of courses he teaches, his integration of classroom and hands-on learning, and the network of collaborations he has established beyond VPCC.

Dave Gamble - District Captain - Sector Virginia, Fifth District Southern Region, United States Coast Guard Auxiliary: Pete's impact on the community extends beyond his employment. For over 13 years, he has been a dedicated member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. Pete became one of the first volunteers to qualify as an operator of shoreside Unmanned Aerial Systems (i.e., drones) in support of active-duty Coast Guard missions. His service has been recognized by three personal service awards and six unit awards.

Dr. Scott Stauble - VPCC STEM Dean: Professor Berquist exemplifies the mission and values of Virginia Peninsula Community College (VPCC) and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). His innovative teaching methods in geoscience courses foster critical thinking and professional skills, directly contributing to transformative education. His leadership in diversity and inclusion initiatives, such as the Unlearning Racism in Geoscience project, underscores his commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment. In every aspect of his work, Professor Berquist strengthens lives and communities.

Dr. Kerry Ragno - VPCC VP Academic Affairs and CAO: Professor Berquist has been an exceptional faculty member at VPCC since 2007. In my tenure, I have had the pleasure of observing Mr. Berquist's commitment to students and colleagues alike. He models and creates excitement in the scientific process for students while helping them surmount external barriers to learning, resulting in successful academic outcomes and persistence. I wholeheartedly nominate Professor Pete Berquist for the 2025 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Award.

Dr. Touwanna Porter Brannon - VPCC President: Pete's journey with our college began as a dual-enrollment student while attending high school in Williamsburg. Since then, he has served our institution in numerous capacities and earned deep respect from his colleagues and the college's leadership. Last year, when a critical challenge arose that threatened our ability to offer high-demand courses, Pete stepped in without hesitation, recruiting other STEM faculty to ensure the program's continuity. His leadership and initiative ensured that our program continued without disruption. As President, I am honored to serve alongside Pete, who is unwavering in his commitment to our mission of changing lives and transforming communities.