An education in maritime and underwater archaeology presents opportunities to participate in unique field schools, lectures, and conferences, but, once school is over, what can a maritime or underwater education lead to? The possibilities for careers are varied and can range from employment in the academic, governmental, or private sectors, to field work, research, and public outreach. 

Education and training opportunities in rapidly evolving technologies such as remote sensing, digital modeling and recording, and geographical information systems (GIS) allow students to market their maritime and underwater education toward the private consulting firms that work with agencies and entities around the world. These skills also make students marketable to local, regional, and federal government agencies that require staff with the background in research, fieldwork, and personal skills that a maritime and underwater archaeology education can foster. The fast-advancing discipline of conservation of materials from waterlogged environments is also an exciting avenue that can be garnered by a maritime and underwater archaeology education.

Additionally, as the public becomes more involved with the stewardship of mariti-
Some of the first and most important projects in underwater archaeology were conducted in European seas and lakes. Most of them have focused on prehistoric, ancient, medieval, and early modern period sites and objects. The situation is different, however, for 20th-century shipwrecks (i.e. primarily, vessels from World War I and World War II). Currently, these wrecks have not attracted as much attention from the archaeological community in Europe, but they appear to be very attractive to recreational divers.

The potential for disturbance from recreational divers prior to any archaeological investigation poses a threat to these sites. In addition, a variety of individual regulations complicate the situation: only selected wrecks are protected, and only a few are supervised by scientists. Moreover, many of the shipwrecks have become environmental hazards, adding to the difficulty of their situation and status.

Due to the lack of any coherent management system in Europe for shipwrecks from the World Wars, there is also an issue of their potential as war graves. If we consider that most of these sites might be seen as war graves, often referred to in Europe as "wet graves" or "blue graves," there may be a variety of human remains issues. To start, the definition of "wet graves" is not clear; they can be regarded as small or medium shipwrecks with dozens of victims, as well as big vessels with hundreds or thousands of victims.

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Trondheim, Norway) is planning to start an international and interdisciplinary project investigating shipwrecks of the World Wars which can be considered war graves. The goals of the project will be to address issues of social significance, protection, management, and standards for archaeological research from a distinctly European approach.

To achieve these goals, the project will perform a preliminary inventory of the sites (due to the size and specification of discussed wrecks, many conventional archaeological methods seem to be inadequate), focus on hi-technology (according to archaeological standards), and last but not least, determine, with the help of oceanographers, the wrecks’ states of decomposition, the post-depositional processes affecting them, and their impacts on the environment.

By gathering scientists from various fields, including maritime archaeologists, historians, museographers, and oceanographers, we believe that we can approach this problem from a wider perspective. Moreover, the project will contain the potential for Ph.D. and M.A. theses.

“...by gathering scientists from various fields...we believe that we can approach this problem from a wider perspective.”

Submitted by Andrzej W. Święch
Recently, ACUA graduate student representatives had the opportunity to talk with Dr. Dave Conlin, Chief of the National Park Service’s Submerged Resources Center and current ACUA Board member, about what it takes to prepare for employment in maritime or underwater archaeology. Read his responses (in italics) to our questions here:

**Why should a student decide to pursue a career in underwater archaeology?**

In my opinion, the only reason to pursue a career in underwater archaeology is because you are passionate about the subject, or some aspect of the subject. Choosing a career in underwater archaeology involves very tough choices—choices to forego a more lucrative career path, choices to delay or forego having a family, a lot of time on the road, and a lot of time away from friends and loved ones. This will wear thin in time and you need to really, really want to do it if you are going to make it work. There will be years, literally years, of hard work to get to a point of comfort and stability. Your passion for the subject is the only thing that will carry you through these tough times. If you aren’t passionate about it, you should have a real conversation with yourself and make the choice to move in another direction sooner rather than later—preferably before you sink thousands and thousands of dollars into graduate school in cash and opportunity costs.

To prepare applying for careers in underwater archaeology, what are the most important things students should do while in school?

I would say that two things are important—network like a maniac through your professors, classmates, and colleagues and then show up with a good attitude and work hard on any project you get onto. Cultivate your reputation because, even as a graduate student, you are getting one whether you want to or not. Pay attention to your interactions with everyone in the field and think about how your performance and actions will get told and retold through the tiny little community of underwater archaeology. Don’t mess your future nest.

If a student has recently graduated but has not yet found employment, what can he or she do to remain competitive?

Network, volunteer, stay busy. Obviously, you need to feed yourself and your family, and you can’t work for free forever, but search for opportunities that you can be a part of that will provide something back to you in the form of new experience with equipment, new types of sites, new career skills, etc., even if it doesn’t pay much or at all. Also be prepared to walk away from a bum gig—any volunteer opportunity worth your time (and your time is worth something no matter where you are in your career) will provide you a benefit on the back side of it—be that networking, references, a better opportunity next time, etc. Do not volunteer for something that will take up your time and lead you nowhere—better to wait tables or work construction, save your money and look elsewhere later. Some time away from the field may be difficult, but it doesn’t have to be fatal to your career. Also, don’t be afraid to push a little—at the end of a volunteer opportunity you are perfectly within your rights to request something from the person or organization you volunteered for.

As an employer, what kinds of skills do you value most among potential employees?

Honestly speaking, the skills I value most are the ability to work with a team in difficult circumstances to achieve a common goal—these skills include willingness to work hard, honesty with myself and the rest of the team, integrity, an eye for finding what needs to get done and doing it without being asked, the ability to see a job through to completion, however small or menial, a passion for the subject, and the ability dive, boat, drive, etc. safely.

Make sure to catch the next issue of **ACUA Student** to read the rest of our interview with Dr. Conlin!
REACHING OUT: PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY FOR STUDENTS AND NEW GRADUATES (PAN-149)

Join your ACUA graduate student representatives and a panel of some of the most respected public archaeologists today to learn about how public archaeology benefits students as they pursue careers in archaeology. Panelists will reflect on their experiences, the utility of public programs in preparing students for a professional career, and ways in which students can take the initiative to utilize public archaeology, enriching interpretations and improving potential employability.

This panel will be held during SHA Annual Conference in Québec City on Saturday, January 11th from 1:30pm-5:00pm and is co-sponsored by the APTC Student Subcommittee and the ACUA.

FIRST ANNUAL STUDENT ETHICS BOWL

A new opportunity awaits at this year’s SHA Annual Conference in Québec City: the Student Ethics Bowl! It is all about having fun and engaging the ethical challenges that you might face down the road. If interested, contact the Ethics Bowl organizers at shaethicsbowl2014@gmail.com and they will connect you with teammates, resources, and case studies. Be a part of the first teams to compete!

Ethics Bowl Rules:
http://www.sha.org/students_teachers/EthicsBowl.cfm

SHA Blog on the Ethics Bowl:

"MY RESEARCH IN A NUTSHELL" PECHA KUCHA STUDENT SESSION

Want to present but missed the deadline for the SHA Annual Conference in Québec City? Want to present but don’t feel like you are ready for a formal paper?

This Student Subcommittee session has the perfect format for you, and you can still register! Presentations consist of 20 slides shown for 20 seconds each for a total of 6 minutes and 40 seconds. E-mail your name, affiliation, and talk title to pechakucha.SHA2014@gmail.com to participate.

SHA Blog on “My Research in a Nutshell:”