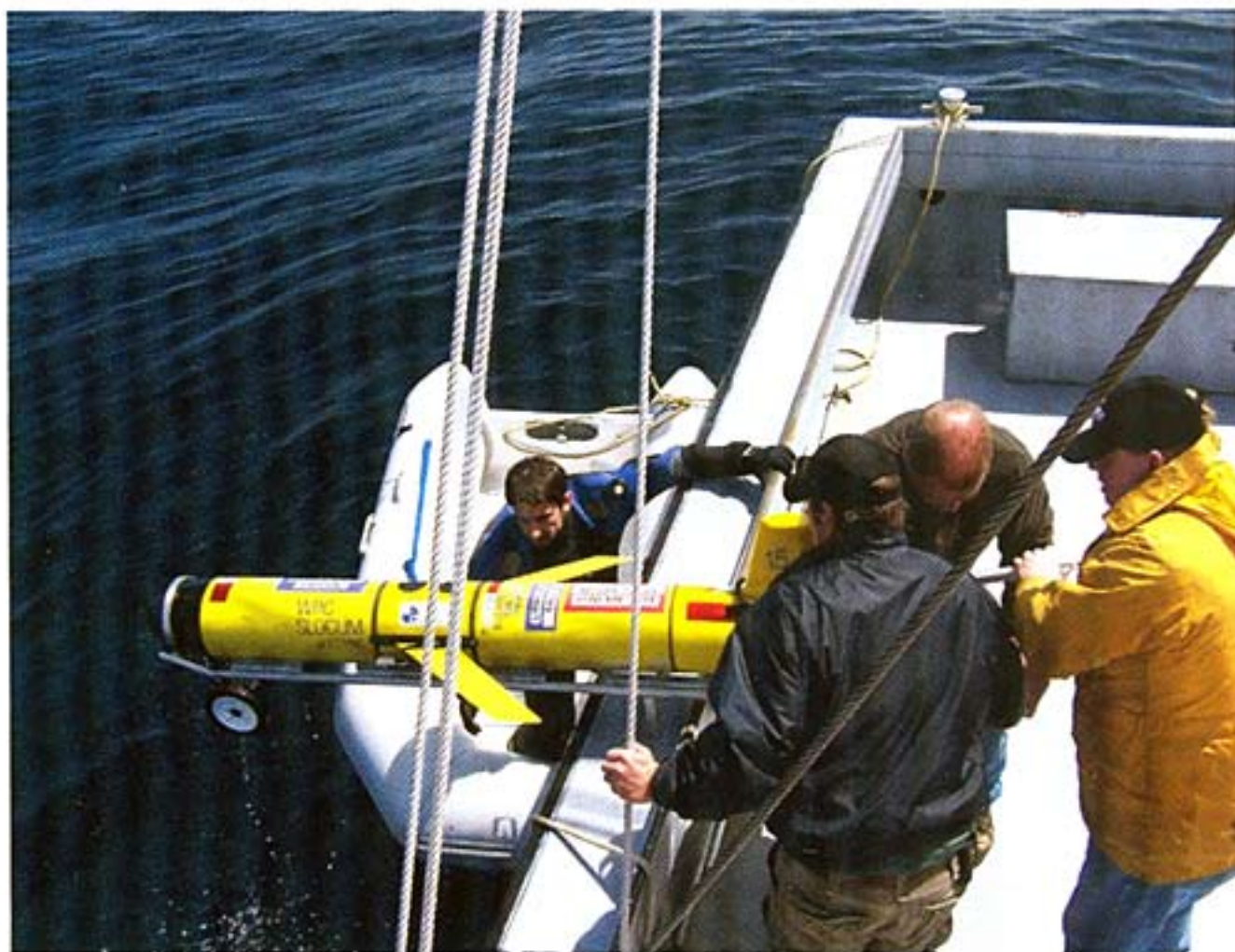


Fantastic Voyage

RU-17, the robotic probe created at Rutgers, swims the Atlantic generating rare oceanographic data—and student interest.

Scott Glenn doesn't live in a yellow submarine, but he is obsessed with them. As the director of Rutgers University Coastal Ocean Observation Lab (RUCOOL), he has spearheaded the development and deployment of several six-foot-long, missile-shaped robotic probes that swim through the ocean gathering up-to-the-minute data of water and temperature conditions. The information is then relayed to the labs at the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences in New Brunswick for analysis by Glenn and his students.

In May, RU-17 was launched off the New Jersey coast, 50 miles southeast of Atlantic City, hitching a ride with an eddy that merged with the Gulf Stream. "Scarlet Knight," as President McCormick christened RU-17 before its launch, moved swiftly northeast in the Atlantic, arcing toward Europe as technicians at Rutgers helped guide the new, longer seven-foot glider, the fleet of which are named Slocum, in honor of Joshua Slocum, who first navigated the globe alone in 1898. As it approaches the continent, Scarlet Knight will assume a southeasterly trajectory before arriving, 2,400 miles later, at its destination of Vigo, Spain, in the fall—the longest unmanned underwater glider flight to date. The gliders, which are underwritten by a \$2.6 million, five-year grant from the National Science



RU-17 is en route to Spain, where it will arrive later this fall to conclude its 2,400-mile journey of information gathering.

Foundation, have already gone to waters as diverse as those surrounding the Antarctic and Puerto Rico.

The idea of RU-17's Atlantic Ocean odyssey was spawned two years ago when Richard Spinrad, an assistant administrator at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, laid the challenge at the feet of Glenn and others in attendance at a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and

Cultural Organization conference in Lithuania to undertake the mission to trigger students' interest in math and science, which has plummeted nationwide. The journey coincides with U.S. Navy and oceanographic institutes' interest in using glider technology, which could create career paths clear as RU-17's trip across the Atlantic for marine and environmental technology students.