

## Call for Applications

### **5<sup>th</sup> Student Workshop on International Coastal and Marine Management in the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Yucatán and Campeche, Mexico January 8-17, 2020**

**Application Deadline: September 9, 2019**

#### ***The Development of an Environmental Report Card for Coastal Campeche, Mexico***

The Gulf of Mexico is facing growing threats from a combination of natural and anthropogenic stresses. These pressures have caused a variety of environmental and economic impacts including degraded water quality, loss of critical habitat, introduction of invasive species, depleted fish stocks, increased coastal erosion, greater vulnerability to coastal hazards, and other problems. The ability to understand the extent of these changes and vulnerabilities and to adopt adaptive management strategies is an essential aspect of improving the environmental and socio-economic health of the Gulf of Mexico region. Moreover, effective management will only occur with the cooperative participation of the three nations that surround the Gulf—Mexico, Cuba, and the United States.

We invite graduate-level students from these three nations to apply to the 5<sup>th</sup> Student Workshop on International Coastal and Marine Management in the Gulf of Mexico (“SWIMM 2020”), which will take place from January 8-17, 2020 in Yucatán and Campeche, Mexico. The workshop is organized by the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi (HRI), the UMDI-Sisal, Facultad de Ciencias of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and the Centro de Investigaciones Marinas at the Universidad de La Habana (CIM-UH), and it is supported by the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and the HRI Furgason International Fellowship.

The Yucatán and Campeche coasts are undergoing rapid changes due to structural transitions in the fishing industry, offshore hydrocarbon production, increasing tourism, and expanding coastal transportation and communications infrastructure. Students will participate in the preliminary development of indicators for a Report Card for Coastal Campeche. These indicators will be used to assess the health of environmental and socio-economic systems along the coast and to monitor positive and negative changes over time.

The workshop will start and finish in Mérida, the capital of the State of Yucatán. The first part of the workshop will be field-based, and students will closely work with local stakeholders and government authorities to learn about local conditions and community priorities. We will first travel to Ciudad del Carmen, the center of offshore hydrocarbon production in Mexico, and take a boat tour of the amazing Laguna de Términos and

associated mangrove system. We will then visit several coastal fishing communities and natural areas on the way to the city of Campeche, the capital of the State of Campeche. Moving north, we will visit the world-renowned Reserva de la Biosfera Ría Celestún before finally returning to Mérida. We will then use information gathered during the field effort to select a set of environmental and socio-economic indicators that represent agents of change and key resources in coastal areas. In addition, these indicators will be used to establish an environmental baseline to prioritize monitoring programs and support future management strategies and decision making. This work will be supplemented with lectures by ecologists and experts dedicated to critical marine species conservation, fisheries, oceanographic measurements and other topics related to sustainable marine and coastal management. During the final stage of the workshop, students will present the results of their efforts to an assembly of university students, faculty and community members.

We invite applications from Ph.D. and M.S. graduate students who are either 1.) enrolled in graduate programs in the United States, Mexico and Cuba, or 2.) who are citizens of any of these three countries, but enrolled elsewhere. Candidates should be engaged in a program of studies and/or research in areas of environmental management, environmental or ecological sciences, environmental anthropology or political and social sciences with focus on environmental issues, community or hazards planning, coastal or marine sciences, oceanography, biology, ecology or marine zoology and related disciplines. We are specifically interested in students who:

- can demonstrate skills in interdisciplinary work or in the design of solutions to problems in environmental resource management,
- have work experience at the interface between management and research, and
- are familiar with innovative or collaborative solutions and that are interested in incorporating educational and/or community components.

We are also interested in students who are committed to studying the problems and challenges of ecosystem conservation the Gulf of Mexico and Greater Caribbean region whether it be through their present work or in the future.

Applications for this program must be completed online at the following URL:

**<https://www.hartheresearchinstitute.org/swimm>**

Please prepare the following materials BEFORE beginning the application process because they will be needed to complete the online application form:

1. **Please compose answers to the following three questions indicating your interest and qualifications to participate in the workshop.** The answers should not exceed 1500 characters each and should be written in simple, clear language.

- a.) How do your research objectives and academic career relate to the theme of this workshop?
- b.) What previous experience do you have with coastal and marine ecosystems?
- c.) How will participation in this workshop help advance your professional (academic and career) and personal goals?

Answers that do not directly address the questions being asked will automatically disqualify an application for further consideration.

**2. Please prepare a single, Adobe Acrobat PDF file of supporting materials that contains the following documents in the order specified:**

- a.) Up-to-date Curriculum Vitae (two-page limit).
- b.) Copy of all college-level transcripts (unofficial transcripts are acceptable).
- c.) Two letters of support, one must be from the applicant's advisor or main supervisor and express their agreement with the student's participation in the workshop. Letter writers should clearly indicate their relationship to the applicant, and provide their contact information.
- d.) Copy of passport valid for at least 12 months. Furthermore, candidates should not have any legal impediment that prevents them from traveling to Mexico. For details about traveling to Mexico as a U.S. citizen, see <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Mexico.html>. For non-U.S. citizens, please review the appropriate information for your country of citizenship.

Submissions that do not closely follow the guidelines above will automatically disqualify an application for further consideration.

**Although fluency in Spanish is not a precondition to participate, most interviews and other hands-on activities in Mexico will take place in Spanish. A strong working ability with the language is highly recommended and will be one of the criteria used to select participants.**

The final announcement of participant selections will be made around September 30, 2019.

The program will cover roundtrip air or bus transport for participants to Mérida, and transport, food, and lodging expenses related to the workshop while in Mexico. Participants will be responsible for expenses in their own home country before and after the workshop (like meals and getting to/from the airport) and for personal items such as toiletries or souvenirs while in Mexico.

Due to travel restrictions and other circumstances beyond the control of the workshop organizers, the current itinerary may be subject to change or cancellation.

**The application process, including submitting the PDF file of supporting documents mentioned above, must be completed by 5:00 pm Central Time on September 9, 2019. Incomplete applications or materials submitted past the deadline will not be considered.**

For more information, please write [swimm@tamucc.edu](mailto:swimm@tamucc.edu).