



**GULF OF MEXICO UNIVERSITY RESEARCH  
COLLABORATIVE**  
([www.gomurc.org](http://www.gomurc.org))

## **2013 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

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### **PURPOSE**

Research university consortia from the five U.S. Gulf of Mexico States came together in 2010 to form the Gulf of Mexico University Research Collaborative (GOMURC), a unified voice for academia and science-based decisions affecting the Gulf States, Gulf coastal and ocean ecosystems, and its nationally important natural resources. While the Gulf States long ago realized that there is strength in numbers by forming state-wide university consortia, a similar regional alliance also makes sense considering the nature of ecosystem-wide stressors such as hurricanes, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (DWHOS), and climate changes. Ecosystem stressors and efforts to understand, mitigate and restore impacted resources transcend geopolitical boundaries.

Universities provide the research capabilities required for an ecosystem approach to managing Gulf natural resources and train the work-force of tomorrow that must deal with mounting stress and economic hardships. Engaging students in crisis response through hands-on experience is a valuable learning tool. After the DWHOS disaster, universities were among the first responders to assess damages, monitor impacts, and determine the nature and fate of spill event materials. These investigator, program and institution-driven efforts, and early results sometimes conflicted with industry and government efforts.

In order to improve coordination among universities, managers, and other stakeholder groups, and grow university capabilities required to support Gulf science and education, leaders of university research consortia in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in late 2010 formally establishing GOMURC. As stated in this originating MOU, the consortia “pledge to collaborate,

communicate, and advocate for science and education efforts needed to address Gulf issues.” The agreement mandates that progress reports be prepared and [posted on-line](#) for each Calendar year, which includes strategic objectives and organization for the report year, highlighted accomplishments, and priority objectives for the coming year.

## 2013 STRATEGY

### VISION AND MISSION

As described in the most recent Strategic Plan approved by the GOMURC Members Board in early 2013, GOMURC’s *vision and mission* include:

#### GOMURC VISION

Gulf of Mexico will be understood scientifically and used economically in a way that ensures sustainability of its natural capital.

#### GOMURC MISSION

A multi-state university-based research consortia collaborating to promote scientific knowledge, workforce development, and understanding that informs natural resource management decisions at state, regional, national and international levels.

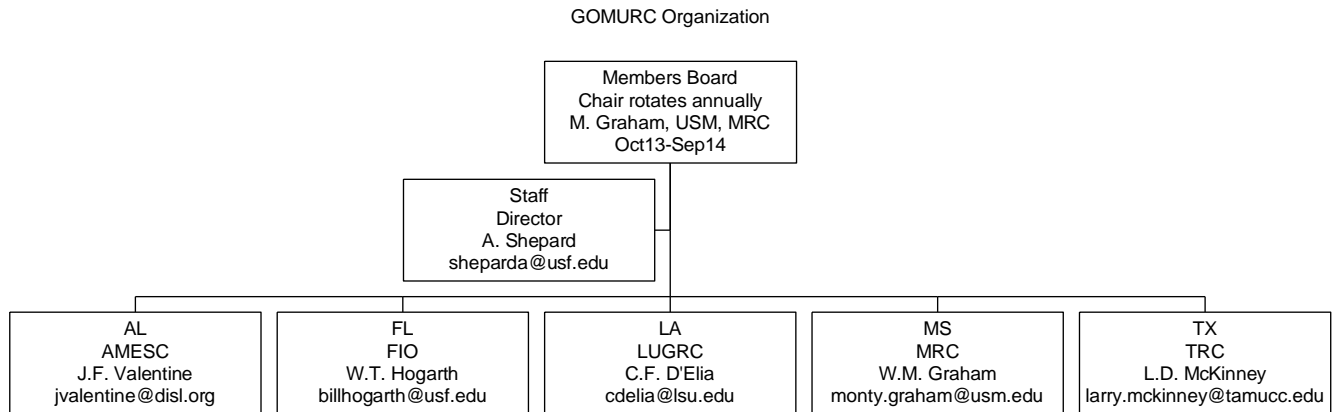
### ORGANIZATION

GOMURC’s organization includes staff, a Member Board, and Gulf research universities (Figure 1 and 2). GOMURC has five Principal Member consortia representing the Gulf States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, representing a total of 80 institutions in 2013 (Appendix A, Figure 2), and host over 170 marine science, policy and socio-economic programs that work on Gulf ecosystem issues. These consortia include:

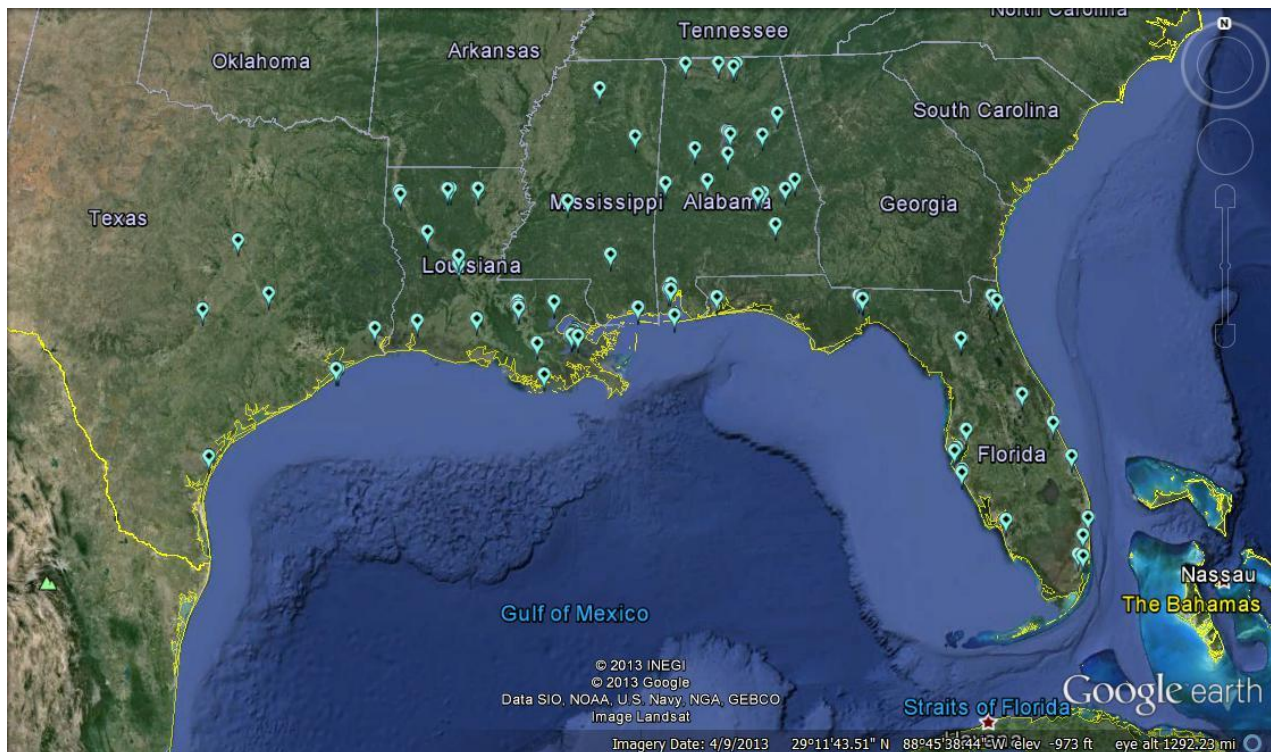
- Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (AMESC)
- Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO)
- Louisiana University Gulf Research Consortium (LUGRC)
- Mississippi Research Consortium (MRC)
- Texas Research Consortium (TRC).

As shown in Figure 1 and defined in the GOMURC By-laws, the GOMURC Board includes a representative from each Principal Member consortium. A Board Chair from one of the Principal Members is assigned based on an annual, rotational schedule prescribed in the By-laws. Chair duties include: preside over Board meetings; call Board meetings at least two times each calendar year; call for other meetings as needed or when requested by two other Principal Members; and oversee the GOMURC Director in carrying out the annual work plan. Each Principal member can designate up to 3 alternates to serve as voting Board members at meetings in their absence (one per meeting). Ex-officio, non-voting members may be nominated and approved by the Board, and engage in Board meetings.

## GOMURC 2013 Annual Progress Report



**Figure 1.** GOMURC 2012-13 Organization; member institutions listed in Appendix A.



**Figure 2.** Location of GOMURC member institutions (80 by Dec 2013, listed in Appendix A); includes only full members of state consortia, not all affiliated members.

GOMURC is administered by the Director and FIO support team. Funding for the Director position and ancillary expenses was provided by support from the University of South Florida, via the USF Foundation, from July 2010 to June 2013. In 2013, new grants from the Walton Family Foundation and Harte Support Foundation also supported the Director position (Jun-Dec) and specific deliverables related to grant objectives. The Director is currently located at FIO, St. Petersburg, FL. With Board approval, ad hoc advisory teams comprised of representatives from GOMURC member universities and other outside expertise as required, are used to address specific regional initiatives.

## OBJECTIVES

GOMURC goals and objectives (Table 1) for 2013 and 2014 include: **advocacy** efforts intended to actively espouse GOMURC mission priorities and capabilities; and **coordination** activities meant to enable collaboration among Gulf science, management and education communities.

**Table 1.** GOMURC goals and objectives intended to serve the vision and mission statements.

Goal	Objective
ADVOCATE for science and education activities required to support science-based policies to restore and sustain Gulf natural resources and economy	CAPACITY-BUILD: Increase support for Gulf universities science and education capabilities through tracking of regional initiatives and legislation
	EDUCATE: Support outreach and education activities that promote university research results, workforce development and public literacy
COORDINATE activities with members, local, state, federal and international partners and authorities in opportunities that advance the GOMURC mission	COLLABORATE: Develop and implement regional initiatives, partnering with universities, NGOs, programs and agencies across the region
	ORGANIZE: Support GOMURC organizational elements and activities.

## 2013 PROGRESS

A detailed progress report (tasks, actions, progress notes and outputs, by goals and objectives in Table 1 and work plan year), is available upon request. Outcomes include:

- New grant from the Walton Family Foundation enables GOMURC members to engage in activities that support Gulf restoration with required science and education capabilities.
- Feedback to restoration plans including RESTORE Act NOAA Science Program’s Science Framework, National Academies of Science advisory group, and RESTORE Act Gulf Restoration Council’s Comprehensive Plan.
- Sponsored [Gulf Restoration Science Workshop](#) to engage restoration managers, scientists and other decision-makers in discussion of how to implement “best available science” in restoration programs.
- Co-sponsored [Gulf Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference](#) in Jan 2013; GOMURC sponsored travel for 19 university students during 2013 and 2014 conferences.
- Initiated *Gulf Restoration Science Programs Coordination Forum*, ad hoc team of new Gulf restoration programs funded by oil spill penalties and BP early restoration funds. GOMURC facilitated monthly via webinars and face-to-face meetings from April to December 2013 to promote communication and coordination ([team web page](#)).
- Initiated informal discussions and meetings with GOMA, GCOOS, and the coordination Team to discuss why and how to develop and fund a new Gulf Observing system required for monitoring environmental restoration and long-term sustainability of Gulf ecosystem goods and services, and many other valued applications.

## 2014 STRATEGY

Strategic goals and objectives for 2014 are the same as 2013 (Table 1); actions and milestones address these objectives and are used to evaluate performance (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Priority tasks, actions, and milestones (date and output) for 2014 by goals and objectives (Table 1); **shaded rows** are on-going tasks (every year). Goal/objective: A/C = Advocate/Capacity-build; A/E = Advocate/Educate; C/C = Coordinate/Collaborate, C/O = Coordinate/Organize.

GOAL/ OBJ	TASK	ACTIONS	MILESTONES
A/C	Develop proposals for regional initiatives	Proposals planned: Gulf Ocean System; restoration science synthesis; ecosystem indicators and data gaps for assessing fisheries/ wildlife (e.g., populations, habitat and ecology)	Progress pending RESTORE Act settlements based on final Treasury regulations and litigation; last proposal is partnership led by FIO-- GOMURC assist with review and RESTORE state portal submissions
A/C	Implement science-based restoration programs	Brief RESTORE Restoration Council on GOMURC priorities and activities	Coordination Team will continue to include Council staff (e.g., Jan 2014 GOMRI conference meetings, town hall session); schedule briefing for GRC Exec. Board
A/C	Implement science-based restoration programs	Comments to restoration programs regarding plans and processes	Respond to plans/notices released; expect to address new plans from funded restoration programs
A/C	Promote need for <i>Gulf Observing System</i> (GOS)	GOMURC Board meeting with GCOOS and GOMA	Collaborative activities in 2014 include GOMA/NOAA workshop in March (GOMURC chair invited); writing team support for GCOOS build-out plan revision
A/C	Track and report new legislation impacting Gulf ecosystem	Track status of DWHOS settlements	Report via bi-monthly newsletter, weekly Google News items, and web page
A/C	Track and report new legislation impacting Gulf ecosystem	Use social networking tools to convey news (Google News Group, Constant Contact Newsletter)	Continue bi-monthly newsletter and week Google News items; re-invite members after contacts list corrected by March 2014
A/E	Communicate with stakeholders to convey GOMURC goals, priorities, and capabilities	Coordinate and promote Town Hall meeting at 2014 GOMRI Conference featuring panelists from restoration programs	Special Session on Jan. 28, 2014; post available presentations
A/E	Communicate with stakeholders to convey GOMURC goals, priorities, and capabilities	Promote regional knowledge of Members' science and education capabilities	Populate Gulfbase.org Ocean Asset Inventory dbase via contract to HRI until Dec. 2014 (WFF \$ and task); market with GOMURC members (e.g., via newsletters and March Members Meeting)
A/E	Communicate with stakeholders to convey GOMURC goals, priorities, and capabilities	Publish position papers on Gulf science and education needs	Manuscripts on economic value of Gulf ecosystem, and implementing science-based restoration and ecosystem-based management submitted and accepted for publication in CY2014
C/C	Meet with scientists and decision-makers to convey GOMURC priority issues	Brief Gulf Ocean Caucus on regional priorities	Schedule briefing in 2014; draft one pager with priorities
C/C	Meet with scientists and decision-makers to convey GOMURC priority issues	Consider expansion/application of USCG/FIO MOU for disaster spill response to other purposes and areas	Status of FIO/USCG District 7 MOU pending; meet with FIO and USCG to assess application to other Districts
C/C	Meet with scientists and decision-makers to convey GOMURC priority issues	Support GOMRI annual meeting— ExComm working group, student travel awards from GOMURC	January 2014 meeting
C/C	Meet with scientists and decision-makers to convey GOMURC priority issues	Support State of the Gulf Summit; co-sponsor, meeting working group	March 2014 meeting
C/C	Partner on science and education initiatives to support Gulf priorities	Facilitate <i>Gulf Restoration Science Programs Coordination Team</i>	Continue facilitation until June 2014; develop new terms of reference for second half of 2014 and beyond
C/O	Administer GOMURC resources	Manage GOMURC grants (Walton Family Foundation, Harte Support Foundation)	Interim progress reports to WFF in Jan 2014 (for second half of 2013) and Jul 2014 for 1 <sup>st</sup> half of 2014)
C/O	Create documents that support GOMURC business	Maintain/archive progress reports, Strategic Plan, By-laws, Communications Plan, contact list, and work plans	Post reports after Board review; Annual report due Jan 2015; 2014 SP and Bylaws updates by Feb 28, 2014 CP by Jun 30; revise contacts after Mar 2014 Summit
C/O	Network to support GOMURC business	Maintain www.gomurc.org	Launch new site enhanced to facilitate access by mobile platforms
C/O	Network to support GOMURC business	Organize and report on Board and Members meetings	Continue monthly Board meetings, including at least 2 F-2-F; GOMURC members meeting at Mar. Summit



**APPENDIX A: GOMURC MEMBERS IN 2013**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Member</b>
Alabama A & M University	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Alabama State University	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Athens State University	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Auburn University	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Auburn University at Montgomery	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Birmingham Southern College	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Dauphin Island Sea Lab	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Grambling State University	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Huntingdon College	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Judson College	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
MS/AL Sea Grant	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Samford University	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Spring Hill College	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Talladega College	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Troy State University	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Tuskegee University	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
University of Alabama	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
University of Alabama at Birmingham	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
University of Alabama at Huntsville	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
University of Mobile	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
University of Montevallo	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
University of North Alabama	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
University of South Alabama	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
University of West Alabama	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
Eckerd College	Florida Institute of Oceanography*
Florida A&M University	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Florida Atlantic University	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Florida Department of Environmental Protection	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Florida Gulf Coast University	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Florida Institute of Oceanography	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Florida Institute of Technology	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Florida International University	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Florida Sea Grant	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Florida State University	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Jacksonville State University	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Jacksonville University	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium	Florida Institute of Oceanography
New College of Florida	Florida Institute of Oceanography

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Nova Southeastern University	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Smithsonian Marine Station at Fort Pierce	Florida Institute of Oceanography
University of Central Florida	Florida Institute of Oceanography
University of Florida	Florida Institute of Oceanography
University of Miami	Florida Institute of Oceanography
University of North Florida	Florida Institute of Oceanography
University of South Florida	Florida Institute of Oceanography
University of West Florida	Florida Institute of Oceanography
Centenary College of Louisiana	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Dillard University	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Louisiana College	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Louisiana State University at Alexandria	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Louisiana State University at Shreveport	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Louisiana Tech University	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON)	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Loyola University	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
McNeese State University	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Nicholls State University	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Northwestern State University	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Our Lady of Holy Cross College	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Southeastern Louisiana University	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Southern University and A&M College at Baton Rouge	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Southern University at New Orleans	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Tulane University	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
University of Louisiana at Lafayette	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
University of Louisiana at Monroe	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
University of New Orleans	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Xavier University	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative
Jackson State University	Mississippi Research Consortium
Mississippi State University	Mississippi Research Consortium
The University of Southern Mississippi	Mississippi Research Consortium
University of Mississippi	Mississippi Research Consortium
Baylor University	Texas Research Consortium
Lamar University	Texas Research Consortium
Texas A & M University - Corpus Christi	Texas Research Consortium
Texas A&M University	Texas Research Consortium
Texas A&M University- Galveston	Texas Research Consortium
University of Texas- Austin	Texas Research Consortium
University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston	Texas Research Consortium

\*- FIO also includes 8 other non-full members.