

GOMURC TWO-YEAR SUMMARY



12/31/2012

SCIENCE AND EDUCATION FOR A
HEALTHY GULF OF MEXICO

In late 2010, research university consortia from the five U.S. Gulf of Mexico States came together 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 the region's nationally important natural resources. This report provides highlights of the first two years of GOMURC, 2011-2012.

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STRATEGY: SCIENCE AND EDUCATION SUPPORT FOR A HEALTHY GULF OF MEXICO

Universities across the Gulf of Mexico States realized that there is strength in numbers by forming state-wide university consortia, and initiated consortia over the past decades. A similar region-wide alliance made sense considering that large-scale, long-term research initiatives are required to address Gulf ecosystem-wide stressors such as hurricanes, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (DHOS), and climate change.

Just as ecosystem stressors cross geopolitical boundaries, so must efforts to understand, mitigate and restore impacted resources.

Universities provide the science and education capabilities required for an ecosystem approach to managing Gulf natural resources. After the DHOS disaster, universities were among the first responders to assess damages, monitor impacts, and determine the nature and fate of spill event materials. Universities train the work-force of tomorrow that must deal with mounting stress and economic hardships, and there is no greater learning tool than engaging students in crisis response through hands-on experiences.



HURRICANE KATRINA IN GULF, 2005 BEFORE LANDFALL. NOAA

UNIFIED IN REGION AND VISION

GOMURC's vision as presented in its Strategic Plan for 2012-2013

(<http://www.marine.usf.edu/gomurc/docs/StrategicPlan-1-10-12.pdf>) is for the ***Gulf of Mexico to be understood scientifically and used economically in ways that ensure sustainability of its natural capital.*** Mission goals and objectives that serve this vision include:

- **ADVOCATE:**
 - Track legislation: Track, review, advocate and share state and federal legislation that impacts Gulf science and education
 - Build capacity: Increase funding for Gulf universities science and education capabilities through regional initiatives.
- **COORDINATE:**
 - Collaborate on regional initiatives: Develop and implement regional initiatives related to Gulf science and education, partnering with universities, NGOs, consortia, programs and agencies across the region.
 - Promote outreach: Support outreach activities that promote university research results, and public literacy regarding Gulf marine and coastal ecosystem issues.
 - Sustain organization: communicate with GOMURC members and sustain program elements.

2011-12 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Annual progress reports provide details of milestones and outputs (available at <http://www.gomurc.org>). Highlighted outcomes in 2011-12 include:

ADVOCATE:

- RESTORE Act passed in July 2012; GOMURC Board dedicated considerable effort to advocacy and providing related information to constituents.

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- Report from April 2012 marine restoration workshop (<http://bit.ly/marinerestore>) co-hosted by Ocean Conservancy, GOMURC and FIO used by Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council in providing its offshore fisheries restoration priorities to the RESTORE Act Gulf Restoration Council.
- GOMURC Board actively engaged in development of oil spill settlement programs in partnership with State and Federal agencies, with emphasis on defining priorities, integration of various programs and inclusion of universities in planning and implementation.
- New funding acquired to support GOMURC Director and strategic activities as far out as Dec. 2015, including continued support from USF Foundation, and new grants from the Harte Support Foundation and Walton Family Foundation.

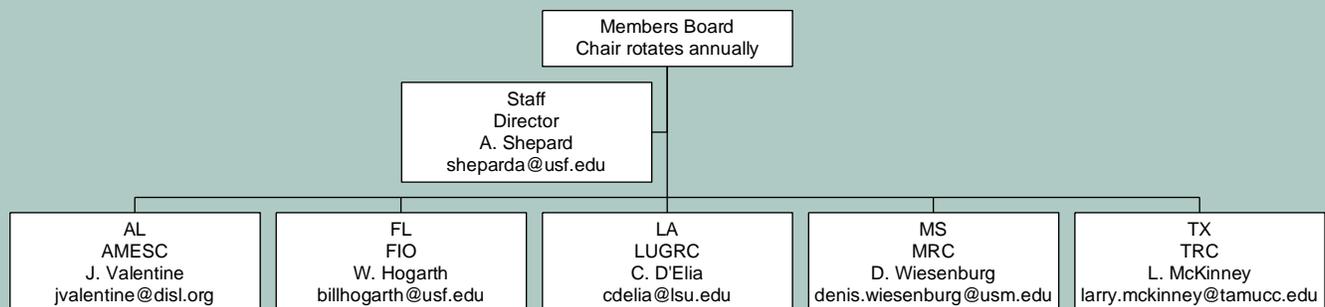
COORDINATE:

- Considerable effort is invested in communicating with GOMURC members and partners through meetings, the GOMURC Web site (www.gomurc.org) and social networking. Board meetings are convened on a monthly basis-- teleconference, Webinar and F-2-F. The GOMURC Google News Group is used to keep subscribed members (representing 30 of the 77 member universities and rising) apprised of key developments in Gulf science and education. Subscription portal is at <http://gomurc.usf.edu/news-events.asp>.
- GOMURC members initiated and collaborated on several regional meetings, for example, 2011 Gulf Summit in Houston, TX, and the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative's science conference in Jan. 2013 in New Orleans, LA.
- Developed and signed MOU with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance enabling participation in joint strategic planning and sharing of knowledge and resources. Mexico universities developed Consorcio de Instituciones de Investigacion Marina del Golf de Mexico (CiiMar-GoM) modeled after GOMURC..

ORGANIZATION

GOMURC's organization includes a Director, a Board, and Gulf member research universities (Org. chart). GOMURC has five Principal Member consortia representing the Gulf States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas; representatives from each serve on the GOMURC Board. As of the end of 2012, these consortia included 77 institutional members, which host over 120 marine science, policy and socio-economic programs that work on Gulf ecosystem-related issues.

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



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