

## Call for Applications

### 8<sup>th</sup> Student Workshop on International Coastal and Marine Management in the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Tabasco, Mexico

Virtual meetings in Summer/Fall 2024 with in-person event in January 2025

**Application Deadline: July 8, 2024**

#### *Development of a Socio-Ecosystem Report Card for Coastal Tabasco, Mexico*

The Gulf of Mexico faces increasing threats from both natural phenomena and human activity. These pressures have resulted in various environmental and economic impacts, such as degraded water quality, damage and loss of critical habitat, introduction of invasive species, depleted fish stocks, increased coastal erosion and vulnerability to coastal hazards, intensified meteorological events and flooding, and similar. Each local area within this region grapples with its own unique set of challenges, and in the coastal zone of Tabasco State, Mexico, many of these pressures are attributable to rapid changes and structural shifts in hydrocarbon extraction, manufacturing, the agro-industrial sector, and the expansion of coastal transportation and communications infrastructure. Understanding the scope of these changes and vulnerabilities is crucial in Tabasco and elsewhere. Adopting adaptive management strategies, which involve incorporating multiple stakeholder perspectives, is essential for improving local environmental and socio-economic health. Moreover, effective management of the entire Gulf of Mexico necessitates collaborative efforts from the three stakeholder nations that border it—Mexico, Cuba, and the United States.

Graduate students studying in these three nations are invited to apply for the 8<sup>th</sup> **Student Workshop on International Coastal and Marine Management** in the Gulf of Mexico (SWIMM). The workshop will be held virtually in Summer/Fall 2024, followed by a fully-funded, 10-day, in-person event in Tabasco and Quintana Roo in January 2025. SWIMM is organized by the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (HRI), the UMDI-Sisal de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), and the Centro de Investigaciones Marinas de la Universidad de La Habana (CIM-UH), and is supported by the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and the HRI Furgason Fellowships.

The focus of this 2024/25 edition of SWIMM is to understand the socio-ecosystem vulnerability of Tabasco in the face of development and adverse environmental changes, assisting with the development of a *Preliminary Socio-Ecosystem Report Card for Coastal Tabasco*. The report card will establish a baseline snapshot of the condition in Tabasco that could potentially be used to prioritize monitoring programs and support future

management strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of its natural resources. The actual report card development process will be led by the Laboratorio Nacional de Resiliencia Costera (LANRESC, see <https://www.lanresc.mx/>) and will include two, three-day formal workshops (mornings only) in August and November 2024 and an in-person, public presentation of the report card to interested stakeholders in Villahermosa, Tabasco, in January 2025. Additionally, there will be supplementary virtual meetings exclusively for the SWIMM program, complementing the events led by LANRESC, throughout Summer/Fall 2024, and the public presentation of the report card in January 2025 will be included as part of a 10-day field experience in Tabasco and Quintana Roo to foster the development of trilateral relationships.

Upon successful completion of SWIMM, students will receive a reference letter and certificate recognizing their participation in the program.

We invite applications from doctorate and masters level graduate students who are either 1.) enrolled in graduate programs in Mexico, Cuba, or the United States, or 2.) who are citizens of any of these three countries, but enrolled elsewhere. We seek candidates from a wide variety of disciplines with at least some connection to the environment via their course of studies or graduate research work. The environmental connection may be via management, ecology, anthropology/economy/health/political/social sciences with focus on socio-environmental issues, community planning, risk management, coastal/marine sciences and engineering, and related disciplines. We are especially interested in students who:

- can demonstrate skills in broadly interdisciplinary work, potentially in the design of solutions to problems in environmental resource management,
- have work or academic 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.

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

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

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

1. **Please compose answers to the following three questions indicating your interest and qualifications to participate in the workshop.** The answers for each question should not exceed 1500 characters (limit is strictly enforced by the online form and not flexible) and should be written in simple, clear language.
  - a.) How does your course of study or graduate research work relate to the theme of this workshop?

- b.) What previous experience do you have with generating scientific or technical knowledge or managing 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 these three questions 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 undergraduate and graduate level college 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.) High-quality scan of passport valid for at least 12 months (Mexican citizens may substitute their INE card for a passport). 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 prerequisite for participation, most parts of the workshop and related activities will take place in Spanish. A strong practical ability to communicate in 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 by e-mail around July 15, 2024.

Regarding the in-person field experience in January 2025, the SWIMM program will cover roundtrip air or bus transport for participants to Tabasco from their airport or bus station of origin, 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.

The current program focus and schedule may be subject to change or cancellation due to circumstances beyond the control of the workshop organizers, such as changes in travel restrictions due to a resurgence of COVID-19 or other unforeseen events.

**The application process, including submitting the PDF file of supporting documents mentioned above, must be completed by 5:00 pm Central Time on July 8, 2024. Incomplete applications or materials submitted past the deadline will not be considered.**

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