

Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU)

University of Southern Mississippi
Fisheries Oceanography and Ecology

Description: The [Fisheries Oceanography and Ecology Lab](#) at the University of Southern Mississippi is seeking applicants for a Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) opportunity at the [Gulf Coast Research Laboratory](#) (GCRL) in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Our overall goal is to provide an undergraduate student with a valuable educational experience through participation in research, with a specific focus on engaging historically excluded groups (HEGs) in the marine sciences. The REU's training and research experiences will focus on ichthyoplankton (fish larvae) and zooplankton of the Gulf of Mexico. As part of the REU, the student will participate on the fourth [Gulf of Mexico Ecosystems and Carbon Cycle cruise](#) (GOMECC-4) aboard the NOAA ship Ronald H. Brown (September 9 through October 18, 2021). The GOMECC-4 cruise will perform a large-scale survey of ocean acidification trends and dynamics in the Gulf of Mexico in support of the NOAA [Ocean Acidification Program's](#) research mission. While at sea, the REU will be trained in methodologies associated with the collection of biological and physical oceanographic data. In the lab, the REU training will include methodologies related to plankton sample processing, larval fish sorting and identification, imaging of plankton specimens using a microscope-camera system, and processing larval fish gut contents for analyses of diet and microplastic ingestion.

Location: Gulf Coast Research Laboratory (Ocean Springs, MS), plus ~40 day cruise aboard the NOAA Ship Ronald H. Brown (Gulf of Mexico)

Eligibility: This opportunity is open to current undergraduate students or recent graduates (within past year) from a 2-year or 4-year college with interests in fisheries oceanography, marine science, plankton ecology, or similar disciplines. A goal of this REU is to conduct education and outreach activities to engage HEGs in the marine sciences, therefore preference will be given to these applicants.

Additional Requirements: Prior to the cruise, all cruise participants (including the REU) must complete a [Health Questionnaire](#) and [Tuberculosis Screening document](#), and provide a list of [Emergency Contacts](#). In addition, current COVID-19 safety protocols require that each participant "shelter-in-place" for eight days prior to boarding the vessel (room and board costs will be covered); during this period, a COVID-19 test will be administered prior to boarding the vessel. Applicants who are not US citizens or green card holders may be required to pass a federal background check (fingerprints must be provided). Lastly, because the cruise will include sampling in Mexican waters, a valid passport and visa may be required.

Duration: 12 weeks (anticipated start date in early August 2021).

Stipend: \$500/week; we also provide housing accommodations at GCRL, and cover the costs associated with round-trip travel between GCRL and the vessel (Key West, FL).

How to Apply: Please send 1) a brief resume or cv, 2) contact information for three references, and 3) a statement of interest, which includes your goals and how this particular REU will help you achieve them. Combine all documents into a single PDF file and send via email to Dr. Frank Hernandez (frank.hernandez@usm.edu). Deadline for applications is June 4, 2021. If you have any questions, please email Dr. Hernandez.