

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

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Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Joins with A&M System Counterparts in Creating Graduate Program in Marine Biology

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – A new interdisciplinary program that will allow students at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi to earn postgraduate degrees in marine biology is expected to be in place in time for the fall semester.

Today, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board gave final approval for a joint interdisciplinary master's and doctoral program utilizing the resources of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Texas A&M University, and Texas A&M University-Galveston, a branch of the system's main campus. The Texas A&M System Board of Regents voted to recommend the creation of the program at its March meeting.

“In the past, students seeking graduate degrees in marine biology had to leave the state to further their careers,” said Dr. Flavius Killebrew, president of A&M-Corpus Christi. “By engaging faculty and resources from all three campuses, we are creating an outstanding program that will attract many of the best and brightest young scientists in Texas.”

The program, the first of its kind among states adjacent to the Gulf of Mexico, will offer both master's and doctoral degrees in marine biology. According to Dr. Greg Stunz, an associate professor and endowed researcher with the Harte Research for Gulf of Mexico Studies, the graduate program is designed to attract students interested in marine biology or any of its sub-disciplines and prepare them for careers in higher-education, government, and private industry.

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“The field of marine biology has been expanding since the beginning of the environmental movement and, with the popularization of marine biology in the media, the demand for this degree is high,” said Stunz. “With a highly-diverse curriculum and state-of-the-art facilities on all three campuses, this new program will provide students with the education and experience needed to succeed in this growing field of research.”

According to Dr. Joanna Mott, a professor in the College of Science and Technology, several additional faculty and staff have been recruited in anticipation of the expanded degree offerings. The addition of the new graduate program, she points out, enhances the University’s standing as a major research institution in the field of marine biology.

“The will build on our strong tradition of marine research and the expertise of our faculty, many of whom are focused on research in the marine biology field,” said Mott. “The interdisciplinary program provides unique opportunities for students, with courses offered across all three campuses and collaborative research studies.”

With two of the three participating campuses situated along the Texas Coast, students will learn and work in areas where the economy is affected by coastal tourism and the presence of petrochemical facilities. In addition, the three involved entities form a geographic triangle that encompasses a high concentration of federal, state, and local governmental agencies which manage the resources and environmental quality of the Gulf of Mexico.