

Site Review Team's Review of the  
Texas Sea Grant College Program  
10-11 May 2011

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*8/31/11*

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Date



## INTRODUCTION

The site review team (SRT) assessment of the Texas Sea Grant College Program (TXSG) took place from 10-11 May 2011 in College Station, Texas.

The SRT members included (see Appendix I for biographical sketches):

<p><b>Gene W. Kim (SRT Chair, Federal Program Officer)</b> NOAA National Sea Grant Office Silver Spring, MD</p>	<p><b>Nancy N. Rabalais (SRT Co-Chair, National Sea Grant Advisory Board)</b> Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium Baton Rouge, LA</p>
<p><b>James W. Ammerman (SRT member, Sea Grant Director)</b> New York Grant Program Stony Brook, NY</p>	<p><b>Brian Allee (SRT member)</b> NOAA Fisheries Portland, OR</p>
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Prior to the SRT visit, and in conformance with National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) guidelines, TXSG issued a notice of the upcoming SRT visit, inviting interested parties to send written comments to the SRT Chair. Distribution of the notice was issued at least 30 days prior to the SRT via a press release to media outlets, posting on the TXSG website, and an email distribution to extension, stakeholder, and researchers throughout the university community. The SRT Chair received no letters in response to the public notice. Prior to the site review, the SRT held one conference call and met in person the morning of the site visit.

The site review took place 10-11 May 2011 at the off-campus TXSG office in College Station, Texas. During the site visit, the SRT met in person and over the phone with TXSG staff and senior university administration members of the fiscal host Texas A&M University (TAMU), TXSG Advisory Board members, local, state, and federal agency personnel, Sea Grant Network partners, and stakeholders. On day one, the SRT was welcomed by Dr. Robert “Bob” Stickney (Director, TXSG), followed by panels on education, healthy coastal ecosystems, safe and sustainable seafood supply, and rapid response issues, as well as a meeting with some members of the TXSG Advisory Committee. The SRT traveled to campus to meet with TAMU senior administration representatives: the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (Dr. Karan Watson); Vice President for Research (Dr. Jeffrey Seemann); and Dean of Geosciences (Dr. Kate Miller). Day one ended with an informal reception, during which some of the panelists remained to interact with the SRT. Day two included panels regarding sustainable coastal development, hazard resiliency, and regional research and outreach, followed by a panel on regional Sea Grant research and outreach efforts. Overall, panelists were appreciative of the role that TXSG plays in the state, indicating the Program provides research, extension, education, and communication that is relevant and useful. A more detailed agenda with presenters can be found in Appendix II.

This report of the SRT follows the guidelines of the Site Review Team Procedures Manual (NSGO, March 2010). The last site review was the 2004 Program Assessment Team (PAT) assessment; thus, this SRT focuses on the period since that visit (~2005-2010). The SRT focused the review and discussion on how well the TXSG met the three broad SRT categories: 1) organization and management of the program; 2) stakeholder engagement; and 3) collaborative network activities. The SRT considered the TXSG Strategic and Implementation Plan when reviewing the Program and used them to guide our findings, suggestions, and recommendations. Within each of these areas, the SRT report presents the findings, recommendations, and suggestions of the SRT.

- ***Finding:** Although most of the recommendations of the 2004 Program Assessment Team Report have been effectively addressed, there still are similar concerns that this SRT shares. These are articulated in the rest of the findings, suggestions, and recommendations and should be re-examined during the transition of Directorship of the TXSG Program.*

## **I. ORGANIZING AND MANAGING THE PROGRAM**

### **Leadership**

The TXSG management team provides leadership for the Program. The team is led by the Director (Dr. Robert “Bob” Stickney). At the time of the site visit, the national search to hire a new Director was concluding, targeted to begin fall 2011, due to the retirement of Director Stickney. In addition to the Director, the management team is comprised of the Associate Director/Extension Program Leader (Logan Respass), Assistant Director/Fiscal Officer (Terry Poehl); and Communications Coordinator (Jim Hiney). Currently, the position of Research Coordinator is vacant, due to a decision made in response to budget rescissions in 2010 (hiring a dedicated Research Coordinator was a recommendation of the 2004 PAT). The duties of coordinating TXSG research are handled by the Director, as was done previously. The management team appears to handle their duties efficiently and professionally.

[Note: Since the completion of the SRT visit, following a nationwide search, the College of Geosciences has selected Dr. Pamela Plotkin from Cornell University as the eighth director in the 40-year history of the Texas Sea Grant College Program. She succeeds Dr. Stickney, who will retire effective 1 September 2011. Plotkin's research has mostly focused on endangered sea turtles.]

The TXSG Advisory Committee provides external guidance for the Program. Its membership includes representatives from state and regional federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, private sector, and academic and research institutions. Their primary role is to provide input and feedback for priority areas of research and recommend changes, if needed, and to provide technical input during the RFP. In addition, the Advisory Committee reviews and advises development of the TXSG Strategic Plan. Very little, if any, of the efforts of the Advisory Committee deal with identifying new resources or fund raising for the Program. Primary communication is electronic, aside from an annual meeting of the Committee. Members of the Advisory Committee attended the review in person and via teleconference.

- **Finding:** *The TXSG Advisory Committee serves as an informal source of input on the direction of the Program, helps review pre-proposals, and identifies opportunities for the Program. The Committee meets annually, and the Director seeks input as needs arise. The membership is primarily from academia and agencies.*
- **Recommendation:** *The TXSG Advisory Committee should have a stronger and more active role in providing input to the Program, such as with strategic planning, program direction with input towards proportional funding of aspects of the overall program, more frequent meetings with Sea Grant staff (virtual or in person), input into the Director’s annual performance evaluation, involvement as needed with the outreach component, and identifying and nurturing external sources of funding. A clear statement is needed for the role of the Advisory Committee with the TXSG Program.*

*In addition to a stronger role in guiding the Program, a more broadly-based membership for the Advisory Committee is recommended. Membership should include more of the stakeholder community. Examples for consideration as Advisory Committee members include: industry (e.g., tourism, ports and navigation, recreational boating and fishing, nature-based tourism, petroleum production and infrastructure, energy development), trade organizations, chambers of commerce, local elected officials (e.g., county commissioners), and different state agencies (e.g., Texas General Land Office). The Advisory Committee may want to be organized by “type/category,” with periodic rotation of committee members within each classification. There should be a continual “rejuvenation” of the Advisory Committee members, guided by strategic planning and the vision of the revised role of the Advisory Committee.*

## **Organization**

Organizationally, TXSG is housed within the TAMU College of Geosciences and the Director reports to the Dean of that College, with whom the SRT met. The PAT report (2004) recommended that the Program report at a higher level and this SRT shares that concern. We agree that the reporting position of TXSG constrains access to senior administrators on issues (e.g., fundraising, negotiating indirect cost rates), limiting the Program. Further, given the state-wide function of TXSG, service potential, visibility, and flexibility likely are hampered by the reporting position of the Program within the fiscal host. Recent regional efforts that require pooling of money and staff resources outside the borders of the state, but within the shared Gulf of Mexico region, could make this reporting level issue more urgent.

The remainder of the reporting structure is relatively straightforward. The management team reports directly to the Director. The communications and education personnel report to the Communications Director. Extension specialists, county-based extension agents, and Knauss Fellows all report to the Associate Director/Extension Program Leader. In addition, extension specialists hold faculty appointments in TAMU academic departments, and county-based agents have dual appointments with the Texas AgriLife Extension (formerly Texas Cooperative Extension) and are considered non-departmental adjunct faculty. In turn, most TXSG Extension personnel are partially supported by Texas AgriLife Extension.

Within the university and beyond, the TXSG Program is committed to a strong educational component via formal and informal approaches. Academically, TXSG is well positioned to

influence careers of Texas students during their K-12, undergraduate, graduate, or professional school tenure. Formal education was highlighted in how it produces lesson plans and activities for K-12 education. To assess this effort, TXSG works with educational researchers to employ pre- and post-test evaluations to gauge student and teacher knowledge and comprehension, develop and evaluate appropriate learning materials, and to assess overall program effectiveness. The SRT also heard about the role that TXSG provides for marine education in underserved primary and middle schools, marine experiential learning in the Floating Classroom Program, and their leadership on the National Ocean Sciences Bowl (NOSB). Recent changes of effort include the re-location of the vessel for the Floating Classroom Program (R/V *Karma*) from Matagorda to Corpus Christi, resulting in an eight-fold increase in population served. Another notable expansion is leadership for two NOSB regional competitions: Dolphin (held in College Station) and Loggerhead (held in Corpus Christi) competitions and hosting the 2011 National NOSB Finals (held in Galveston). Further, TXSG research supports undergraduate and graduate students, though there was no dedicated effort to tracking these students' careers after receiving TXSG funds.

- ***Finding:*** *Given the current Director's area of expertise, the current demands of existing direct reporting to senior administrators, and working relationships among the current personalities in place, the reporting line for the Sea Grant Director within the university appears to be nominally working within the structure of the TAMU organization. However, many other Sea Grant Directors report directly to the Vice President for Research (VPR) or Provost at the campus at which they are hosted, signaling to the external community the stature of the Program.*
- ***Suggestion:*** *With changes in leadership of the Program and possible changes within the TAMU system, flexibility and re-examination of the reporting relationship is strongly encouraged. For example, given the new Director's area of expertise, she may have an appointment in the College of Geosciences, the College of Agriculture and Life Science, or another College. In general, we believe that in order to be effective, a Sea Grant Program needs to report to a higher level, either directly to the VPR/Provost or jointly to the VPR/Provost and the Dean of Geosciences (or applicable college for the new Director). This could generate more support and broader opportunities for TXSG. This supports the recommendation in the 2004 PAT report.*
- ***Finding:*** *The current Director is heavily involved with the research portfolio management with the help of the staff. This allows other staffing to work in other areas of the overall program to the benefit of the program.*
- ***Suggestion:*** *Although budgets are tight, consideration should be given to having a dedicated staff person oversee the research portfolio, depending on the interests of the incoming Director and her overall goals for the program. Relieving the incoming Director of these duties will allow time for strategic planning and partnering opportunities. This supports the recommendation in the 2004 PAT report.*
- ***Finding:*** *This SRT agrees with the assessment of the 2004 PAT that the off campus location provides many amenities (e.g., easy access for visitors from outside TAMU, modern, spacious, and professional offices that present a professional image to the visitor). This is an efficient office space, with a good tradeoff in expense, due to the off-*

*campus indirect rate. However, the distance from campus still may inhibit some relationships with campus facilities, faculty, staff, and students.*

- **Suggestion:** *The SRT suggests that TXSG informally re-evaluate whether the current location remains the best model for the TXSG Program and continue to explore options for location of the Program on the main campus.*
  
- **Finding:** *There is no formal method of recognizing graduate students funded on TXSG research grants.*
- **Suggestion:** *The program should consider the implementation of a Sea Grant scholar program, or similar, to help publicize Sea Grant graduate student support and facilitate tracking of these students. Such a program provides a “branding” opportunity and provides a special status for the graduate students supported.*
  
- **Finding:** *Texas has a large and diverse population, as well as a large coastal area. It appears that the state, as a whole, does not recognize the many values found in its coastal zone or does not readily identify with its coast. Some coastal and Great Lake states have developed specific education programs not only for coastal residents and visitors, but also for youth and adult audiences throughout the state. This seems a worthy approach for TXSG.*
- **Suggestion:** *Examine new opportunities for educational programming for youth, family and adult coastal and statewide audiences, particularly focusing on underserved audiences. Investigate potential approaches to better understanding how different audiences learn when they can choose when, what, and how to learn (e.g., free-choice learning). Learning is a lifelong activity that is not confined to classrooms, workshops, or conferences, and not limited to students or those seeking professional training.*

### **Programmed Team Approach**

The TXSG conducts a two-step request for proposals (RFP) to recruit faculty talent once every two years, including a pre-proposal and a full-proposal stage. Prior to the RFP, research priorities are drawn from the TXSG Strategic Plan and determined in collaboration with the TXSG Advisory Committee, in addition to input provided by TXSG extension specialists and agents. Given that the TXSG Strategic Plan is aligned with the National Sea Grant Strategic Plan, research projects are expected to contribute to achieving both plans.

The RFP is issued every other December and distributed and communicated widely. The RFP is posted on the TXSG website, sent to a listserv of about 200 potential principal investigators (PIs), department heads, and deans for further distribution. In January, the TXSG management team travels to meet with prospective PIs at three locations: College Station, Galveston, and the mid-coast (Corpus Christi or Port Aransas). At each meeting, TXSG management staff explains the priorities and the process for submission of proposal. One important function of these visits is to provide information for PIs (e.g., early career PIs, social scientists) who may have little experience with TXSG. The steps taken to distribute the announcement and meet potential PIs appear to work to ensure a large number of pre-proposals.

This process typically yields 50-60 pre-proposals, which are evaluated within the state using members of the Advisory Committee and extension and communication staff with specific areas

of expertise. After evaluation, PIs are either encouraged (or not) from submitting full proposals. Proposals from PIs that were not encouraged to submit a full proposal but do so regardless are given the same consideration as others. The RFP requires the PIs to identify one or more Sea Grant extension or communications staff members who would be involved in the research for the full proposal stage. The PIs are strongly encouraged, but not required, to contact staff before submitting the proposal in order to produce a more robust proposal. Full proposals are evaluated by out-of-state subject-matter experts, followed by a technical review panel (also with out-of-state members) that provides a funding recommendation for the Director. Generally 8-12 projects are selected for funding.

In addition to the state-wide RFP, TXSG is a partner in Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant RFPs. The four Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant Programs have developed and published a regional research plan (September 2009) and have initiated a regional research RFP to implement aspects of that plan. In that effort, proposals were required to involve at least two of the four Gulf Sea Grant Programs. There are a number of ongoing regional projects in research, extension, outreach, and education being led directly by the four Sea Grant Programs in the Gulf of Mexico.

- ***Finding:*** *The RFP process in place appears to produce an acceptable balance of pre-proposals, full-proposals, and funded projects within Texas academic and research institutions. Many steps are in place to handle conflict-of-interest issues. The Program has a strong base of researchers, many of whom reside in the host institution, which includes TAMU main campus and TAMU-Galveston. Thus, it is not surprising that faculty of the host university are heavily represented among the funded proposals.*
- ***Suggestion:*** *Continue the practice of in-person visits across the state to meet with potential PIs, but extend to campuses outside of the TAMU and University of Texas systems, including other public and private academic and research institutions that house marine science talent. Also, the use of program development funds could result in more diverse representation of faculty from other Texas institutions. Such program development funds can be used as rapid response funds or for other program development. Guidelines from the NSGO state that program development funds can be no more than 10% of the federal core, in any one year.*
- ***Finding:*** *Recent history and potential changes to the TAMU University Research Services may jeopardize the planned research portfolio, including the recruitment of students and gearing up for field seasons. In the past omnibus cycle, there was a delay in processing the award that lasted several months. This is detrimental to proper planning for research and other activities.*
- ***Suggestion:*** *Work with NSGO and University Research Services to ensure efficient and effective processes and personnel, perhaps by transitioning to a common SG fiscal platform (e.g., the Maryland or MIT system). These fiscal matters should be seamless and not jeopardize the planned research.*

## **Support**

The bulk of Program funding supports research and extension. During recent omnibus funding cycles (2006-2010), about 41% of total funding supported research and 32% supported

extension. Management (15% of total funds), communications (11% of total funds), and rapid response (2%) were supported to a lesser proportion. When categorized by focus area during 2006-2010, hazard resiliency received 42%, healthy ecosystem received 25%, sustainable communities received 18%, and seafood supply received 15% of total research funds. Aside from potential state and university funding decreases, there appears to be solid support from TAMU, as well as federal, state, and county partners. Partnering agencies, including Texas AgriLife are making large contributions to the program, both financially and otherwise.

The TXSG Program has endured erosion of both federal and matching funds in recent years, and now faces significant challenges as these trends are expected to worsen. During recent omnibus funding cycles (2006-07 to 2009-10), core federal support averaged \$2.0 million with matching funds of \$1.1 million. However, the core federal funding support has declined from \$2.2 million (2006-07) to \$1.9 million (2008-09 and 2009-10). Matching funds, including state funding (TXSG management, communications, extension) and other university sources (research projects), were variable but showed less of an obvious trend. Matching funds for Management, Communications and Extension are from state funds. Matching funds for Research are from various sources determined by the universities of the Principal Investigators. As a result, the overall program support (federal plus match) gradually declined from \$3.3 million (2006-07) to \$2.9 million (2009-10). The SRT heard that an acceleration of the state budget decrease of 2.5% in 2009 is likely to occur in the near future. A rescission in the 2011-2012 biennium of an additional 25% in the Special Item from the Legislature was reported as likely, in addition to a 10% rescission from the university budget in 2011. These projections of state and university sources of matching funds jeopardize full support of the Program.

- **Finding:** *There is a trend towards falling short of the expected balance of funding between competitive research/education and other elements of the program. The guidelines from the NSGO state that approximately 45-65% of the federal core funds are awarded competitively. With the addition of success in regional Sea Grant competitions, the TXSG Program may have met that guideline in some years, but that is largely beyond the control of the Program. In tough financial times, such as these, we realize that this guideline is difficult to follow, but we urge the Program to address this.*
- **Finding:** *Threats to state and university matching funds could jeopardize TXSG's ability to access federal funding.*
- **Recommendation:** *The Program should make sure that University administrators are keenly aware of the importance of state matching funds to the receipt of the Federal Sea Grant appropriation.*
- **Finding:** *Overall, state and federal funding for TXSG is declining or at best leveling off.*
- **Suggestion:** *The Director and staff should explore the options for acquiring additional funding from all sources, including federal and state agencies not ordinarily approached, as well as foundations and private donations. Agency funding would be directed through the University's sponsored projects office as with regular grants, while private donations and foundation support may necessitate working with the University's development office. Private fundraising is a new frontier for most Sea Grant programs, but one that will likely become increasingly important in the future.*

- **Finding:** *State lobbying efforts of the TXSG Director are limited by the University's government relations office.*
- **Suggestion:** *The Director should work with the University's government relations office to optimize state lobbying procedures for TXSG, with potential joint visits of University and Sea Grant staff to legislative offices. Federal lobbying efforts should continue as currently carried out, but also in coordination with University government relations staff.*
- **Finding:** *The 2004 PAT Report found that the fiscal host, TAMU, collects full indirect costs for the first \$25,000 of each subcontract. Given that TXSG subcontracts out about half of its research funding outside of the home institution to other parts of TAMU system and other Texas institutions, this reduces the amount of funds for research.*
- **Recommendation (continued from the 2004 PAT):** *Subcontracts issued to off-campus institutions should carry, at the maximum, the off-campus indirect cost rate rather than the on-campus rate. This allows more program funds to go to program activities.*

## II. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

### Extension/Advisory

The TXSG Extension Program provides services tailored to the needs of residents along the Texas coast. Extension specialists are located at TAMU and in coastal counties. County-based extension agents are located along the coast, supported by a combination of TXSG, Texas AgriLife Extension and local county funds. Aside from personal interactions among extension personnel, members of the TXSG Extension Program communicate regularly via monthly teleconferences and an annual TXSG Extension "All Hands" training workshop.

The Extension Program is undergoing changes, due to a combination of budget restrictions and staff retirements. This offers both challenges and opportunities. The SRT heard about some pending retirees who will soon return part-time (50%) to TXSG to continue focal areas for TXSG, including marine aquaculture, marine business, fisheries, and environmental science. These, along with a vacancy in the county agent position in Brazoria County, allow flexibility in an uncertain budget environment. Recent growth areas for the Program appear related to hazard resiliency, volunteer programs, and coastal community development. The Texas Coastal Watershed Program is one recent growth area, in addition to a planned hire of a second coastal community specialist associated with the Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve.

The TXSG Extension Program has embraced volunteer training efforts as part of their engagement approach. The Texas Master Naturalist volunteer program has become an integral part of TXSG. Efforts led by TXSG and Texas Parks and Wildlife formally train and oversee volunteers, providing an impressive amount of labor and informal educational opportunities. After completing over 40 hours of classroom and field training, currently over 500 volunteers are active. Also, TXSG helps train the Red Tide Rangers to collect water samples, do preliminary cell counts, and submit information to the NOAA Phytoplankton Monitoring Network. Also, TXSG works with volunteers and NOAA NMFS-Galveston on the Marine Mammal Stranding Network.

- **Finding:** *The SRT finds that the TXSG Program continues to be a leader in the area of stakeholder engagement, particularly regarding fisheries and seafood, environmental science, marine education, community development, and natural hazards resiliency. However, there are profound changes in demands from both traditional and new sectors, combined with unstable support for delivery of TXSG Extension Program services.*
- **Recommendation:** *“Visioning” - We recommend that TXSG be forward thinking and visionary to determine its future. The program is at a crossroads, given the recent (and pending) retirements of key staff (including the Director), changes within TAMU, and demographic shifts— these all influence the needs of the state’s coastal areas and the supply of resources available from TXSG. This must be accomplished by using all resources available, including its Advisory Committee, stakeholders, faculty and staff. As such, the TXSG Program should employ a more comprehensive stakeholder survey that encompasses the geographic, topical, and cultural diversity along the Texas coast. These data would help identify information, outreach and research needs (including those for underserved audiences and geographical areas). Survey information, as well as extension agent input, regional and national priorities, and input from a reformulated and reinvigorated advisory committee will allow a clearer vision of the direction of the TXSG program in such a changing “landscape.” The direction and pace of implementation will be determined for the Program’s future and can benefit the new Director and the formulation of the new strategic plan.*
- **Finding:** *The partnership between TXSG and Texas AgriLife Extension appears to be a great asset, given that they are responding to similar issues and trends. Current TXSG extension programming, delivery and financial support from Texas AgriLife Extension are a significant intellectual, physical, and financial resource for TXSG. Most extension programs struggle to adjust to new issues while maintaining services for traditional stakeholders and to attempt new methods of delivery of information to stakeholders.*
- **Suggestion:** *Continue to nurture a strong working relationship with Texas AgriLife Extension and encourage reporting of impacts that reflect both AgriLife and TXSG in their mutual and separate reporting systems and impacts. Encourage the active participation of AgriLife leadership at the state and local areas in the visioning processes. Although no formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between TXSG and Texas AgriLife Extension appears to be in place, the current Associate Director/Extension Program Leader fosters an excellent working relationship between the two entities, having worked for Texas AgriLife Extension prior to his current appointment. Yet, the SRT suggests that a formal MOU would be useful, in case of staffing changes (this is a similar recommendation of the 2004 PAT).*
- **Finding:** *TAMU is a Land-, Sea- and Space-Grant Institution with missions for research and engagement, in addition to the traditional teaching mission. All mesh closely with the Sea Grant Program. Given that Cooperative Extension reports through Texas AgriLife Extension, not through the University Provost, the TXSG Program seems poised to provide a model and conduit for outreach and engagement within TAMU.*
- **Suggestion:** *Develop significant interactions of its extension personnel in activities, in planning, in research and in engagement with relevant academic units of the university,*

particularly with the College of Geosciences and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Include promising interactions with non-traditional schools and Departments, such as the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning, the Bush School of Government and Public Service, the College of Education and Human Development, and the Mays Business School.

- **Best Management Practice:** *The Floating Classroom and application of volunteer efforts (e.g., Texas Master Naturalists, Red Tide Rangers) are worthy of national dissemination to other Sea Grant Programs for their consideration.*
- **Best Management Practice:** *The TXSG Program continues to be a national leader in providing technical and outreach capacity building for public policy leaders in coastal communities and in natural hazards recovery for communities of place (e.g., geographic, ethnic) and communities of interest (e.g., boating and fishing boat recovery after coastal storms).*
- **Best Management Practice:** *The SRT was impressed by the impacts presented by the various extension projects during the site visit. By capturing these in writing to produce succinct, meaningful impact statements, TXSG efficiently informs the Sea Grant Network and the NSGO of the significant accomplishments. The SRT suggests that this serve as a model for other Sea Grant Programs on how to construct meaningful impact statements that reflect their accomplishments.*

## Relevance and Relationships

Care is taken to ensure that TXSG activities are relevant to coastal constituent needs, starting with direct interaction with stakeholders in the counties. Each extension agent has a Leadership Advisory Board (including those who live, work, and are elected to lead coastal communities), which oversees the agent's work plan and integrates a county's perspective into the comprehensive Extension Program. These bodies provide research and outreach needs from the local perspective, which are shared with the TXSG Advisory Committee to guide their recommendations on RFP research topics. In turn, funded researchers are engaged with extension (hence, stakeholders), because PIs are required to list TXSG personnel in final proposals as partners for outreach.

In order to voice stakeholder needs, TXSG personnel are actively engaged by serving on numerous boards, committees, and councils. By bringing to bear their expertise and experience on a variety of coastal issues, TXSG extension personnel can voice the perspectives of coastal stakeholders who are unable to attend all the myriad of decision-making meetings. In addition, the Texas Community Future Forum, hosted by Texas AgriLife Extension, has been an effort to gather stakeholder input from communities.

Highlights that the SRT heard during the visit included panels on TXSG focal areas:

- Healthy Coastal Ecosystems: The SRT heard about the Clean Marina Program, Monofilament Recovery and Recycling Program, volunteer restoration efforts after

Hurricane Ike, a large estuary restoration project, marshalling volunteer efforts to restore public resources after Hurricane Ike and to monitor algal blooms and marine mammal strandings.

- **Safe and Sustainable Seafood Supply:** There were strong TXSG efforts in this topic, including work with commercial fishers to modify trawl gear to reduce bycatch and adopt boat design changes to decrease fuel consumption, and petitions for and support of the USDA Trade Adjustment Assistant Program, which financially supports sectors (e.g., Gulf shrimpers) that were adversely affected by imports. These efforts provide tremendous direct economic impact to the commercial fishing sector and sustain jobs and livelihoods. Aquaculture training and research support both production of saleable product and the enhancement of recreational fishing along the coast.
- **Sustainable Coastal Development:** This included development of the Coastal Community Planning Atlas to assist policy decisions, technical leadership in the Houston-Galveston area for smart growth, transportation, and hazard mitigation issues, and the Leadership Matagorda Program that trains local leaders on coastal issues.
- **Hazard Resiliency:** The TXSG Program was critical to local communities after Hurricane Ike, quantifying the economic impact of loss of fishery resources (e.g., docks, facilities, ice houses, and boats), recovering vessels, and coordinating with The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). A partnership with the NOAA National Severe Storm Laboratory provides coastal flooding predictions from meteorological data. Finally, the Rip Current Program provides multi-lingual information on safety while swimming.

In many ways, TXSG communications are seen as part of the extension and outreach, rather than a wholly separate entity. Communication at TXSG is done through its Marine Information Service (MIS) program. The MIS Program has a “full communications shop,” which can deal with all stages of product development. One important task is to provide the results of scientific research funded by the TXSG to the general public, in addition to regular presentations to experts at scientific and technical conferences. This requires making the information physically more accessible in the form of TXSG website, newsletters, workshops, town hall meetings, news media, pamphlets and other written materials in order to convey the relevant coastal and marine-related information to stakeholders in non-technical terms. Past examples include the exemplary *Texas Shores* magazine (a publication for sale about life along the Texas coast); this publication was discontinued in 2006 due to budget constraints and is planned to be replaced with a web-based newsletter. Beyond traditional communication and education methods, such as newsletters, workshops, and science teacher training, the Program has adopted emerging social media for information delivery (e.g., YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook). The combined result of these efforts is to increase exposure for the Program as a source of reliable, science-based information.

- ***Finding:*** *The work of the TXSG communications has been solid, yet must continually respond to new delivery methods and boast its products on the national level. Conventional methods of communication that target traditional audiences may no longer adequately serve modern audiences, in terms of how and when information is delivered. The velocity of change in audience interest and in tools of communication is both a challenge and an opportunity for Texas Sea Grant.*

- ***Suggestion:** We suggest that TXSG continue to investigate the application of new communication tools (e.g., smartphone apps, social media) for extension personnel, educators and communicators. Also, TXSG should consider a range of options for electronic publication of Texas Shores, based on assessing audiences and use of new technology. A static electronic newsletter version of Texas Shores is just one use of the many electronic media to reach today's audiences. The outcomes from these new and existing communications avenues should routinely be submitted to the National Sea Grant Library and the National Sea Grant Office.*

### **III. COLLABORATIVE NETWORK/NOAA ACTIVITIES**

The TXSG Program is active within the Gulf of Mexico Region. The Program actively collaborates with the neighboring Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant programs. This includes development of the Gulf of Mexico Research Plan, the NOAA Coastal Storms Program Pilot Cooperative Agreement, the new climate outreach community of practice, the Hydrological Restoration Criteria Panel, and joint funding of RFPs on coastal resilience and climate adaptation that address regional priorities (including TXSG leading the RFP for ecosystem services valuation). These regional efforts allow combined funding, and resultant increases in applicability of the work to a regional level. In addition, other regional contributors to this partnership include the USEPA-Gulf of Mexico Program and the NOAA regional cooperative institute (Northern Gulf Institute). Also, TXSG is active in the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, the regional governance program developed by the five U.S. Gulf of Mexico states.

The TXSG Program was committed and involved in the response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, even though Texas was not directly impacted. At the start of the disaster on 22 April 2010, the regional website for the Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant Programs already was hosted and supported by TXSG. Having this in place allowed an accelerated launch of a regional 'Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico' website (<http://gulfseagrant.tamu.edu/oilspill/index.htm>), which debuted within two weeks after the start of the disaster. Up-to-date information was aggregated by all four Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant Programs and managed on the TXSG servers. Clearly, flexibility and existing regional cooperation among the Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant communicators allowed rapid dissemination of neutral information during the chaos that immediately ensued after the oil began to escape. In addition, TXSG helped write a regional proposal for Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant/ Land Grant to capture a \$400K rapid response grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Funds from the National Sea Grant Office helped expand the seafood safety effort within Texas.

During the period for this evaluation, TXSG is engaged with the Sea Grant Network primarily on extension issue. Prior to the 2004 PAT report, the majority of the TXSG management staff appeared involved in providing leadership for the National Sea Grant Network (i.e., the Sea Grant Association, National Sea Grant Communicators Steering Committee, Fiscal Officers Network). Most of the current Sea Grant Network efforts support the Assembly of Extension Leaders and the Sustainable Coastal Development Focus Area. Examples of county-based extension agents contributing to the larger Sea Grant Network appear to be limited to working on activities parallel to those of their colleagues in other Sea Grant Programs. An example of this is extension providing technical training mandated under the Trade Adjustment Act; similar

activities occur throughout the Sea Grant Network for other states and sectors that are eligible for these funds (e.g., lobster fishing industry). As a whole, participation by county-based extension agents with regional counterparts and the Sea Grant network was not apparent during the site visit. The SRT realizes that restrictions on travel funds and other issues exist; however, interactions with Sea Grant colleagues represent career development and beneficial ‘cross-fertilization’ with other agents who work on similar topics. Such collaborations could benefit their day-to-day activities and the Sea Grant Network.

The TXSG Program is directly engaged with state disaster management agencies. For example, after Hurricane Ike, requests were being made for accurate assessments of hurricane damage to area infrastructure, housing, businesses, forestry, agriculture and fisheries. While good estimates were provided for most of the aforementioned categories, reliable and accurate data were severely limited for fisheries and aquaculture damages. TXSG’s damage assessment surveys have provided an accurate portrayal of fisheries related impacts and are now depended upon by the Governor’s Division of Emergency Management, Texas Department of Public Safety, Farm Service Agency and others, not only for hurricanes, but freezes and other natural disasters. Also, TXSG gained a seat on the Coastal Coordination Council, which administers the state's Coastal Management Program.

The Program has a consistent track record in National Sea Grant competitions, including at least one Knauss Marine Policy Fellow selected in each year since the 2004 PAT visit, with three being accepted per year in 2006 and 2007, and four per year in 2005 and 2008. Also, fellowships for the NMFS Marine Economics Fellows were awarded in 2008 and in 2010. The program exposes new Knauss Fellows to the principles of Sea Grant before they depart for Washington, DC for their year working for the executive or legislative branch of federal government. For example, they are paired up with extension personnel and travel to the field to witness the methods and value of stakeholder engagement and they attend research conferences and review panels when appropriate. The TXSG Extension Leader has traveled to Washington, DC to provide ‘Sea Grant 101’ training for the entire cohort of incoming Knauss Fellows.

Interactions with federal agencies occur throughout the TXSG Program. These include co-location of a pending extension agent to work on coastal development issues at the NOAA Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve, the current extension agent associated with the NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory, and the gear development work with the NOAA Fisheries-Galveston Lab and Southeast Regional Fisheries Office. A strong, formalized working relationship with FEMA and the Texas Division of Emergency Management was not apparent. Overall, interaction with the regional Sea Grant and Federal network is strong, but some attention to the National Sea Grant Network is warranted.

- ***Finding:*** *The regional partnership among the Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant Programs for research, communications, and extension are exemplary. The rapid response, flexibility, and cooperation of science-based information in the face of the Gulf Oil Spill Disaster affirmed this. The decision to co-fund 50% of Sea Grant personnel to serve as a research coordinator appears to have made a difference in gathering information and delivering the Regional Research Plan in a timely fashion.*

- **Finding:** *The interaction between TXSG and the federal and state agencies is strong. Examples include the extension agent on the project at the National Severe Storms Laboratory, a potential agent for the Mission Aransas National Estuarine and Research Reserve, work with the NOAA Fisheries on gear design, Trade Adjustment Assistance with US Department of Agriculture, disaster claims with FEMA, and red drum stock enhancement with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Also, leadership is apparent for the Sea Grant Network in terms of the extension activities.*
- **Suggestion:** *Continue these important interactions and re-consider the future of the NSSL agent and the future NERR agent, and look for opportunities to continue these interactions as employees retire. Continue to work to formalize an engagement effort with FEMA to provide significant local expertise before disasters arise.*
  
- **Finding:** *As a whole, management leadership to the Sea Grant Network is currently limited to the extension network, and there is only very limited participation by county-based extension agents with regional counterparts and the Sea Grant network.*
- **Suggestion** *Re-consider the amount of management team efforts devoted to similar efforts across the Sea Grant Network and county-based agents contributing to larger networks. The SRT realizes that restrictions on travel funds and other issues exist; however, interactions with Sea Grant colleagues represent career development and beneficial ‘cross-fertilization’ with other agents who work on similar topics. Such collaborations could benefit their day-to-day activities and the Sea Grant Network.*
  
- **Finding:** *The SRT heard tremendous stories of how TXSG Extension was able to connect coastal citizens to federal resources in times of disaster or economic crisis. These included post-hurricane recovery of industry infrastructure and vessels, in addition to longer-term crises of economic issues like the impact of imports via the petition and training for the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program.*
- **Suggestion:** *In order to be able to remain flexible in the face of these issues, time and program funds must be committed. The SRT suggests that a process be formalized to capture expenses devoted to disaster response and lost work/revenues and SG personnel receive training in order to expedite future claims to re-coup these costs.*
  
- **Best Management Practice:** *The SRT heard that many of the employees in NOAA have had some Sea Grant support in their career. The efforts that TXSG has taken to educate future ocean leaders in the Knauss Fellowship program likely will pay tremendous dividends. This includes on-boarding for TX fellows and ‘SG 101’ training for the larger Knauss cohort. A small commitment of staff time and the fellow’s time to meet extension agents and stakeholders and participate in research conferences and panels will help communicate the impact of Sea Grant.*
  
- **Best Management Practice:** *This regional partnership should be aspired to by the other Sea Grant Regions. Cooperatively funding regional sea grant programs has yielded outcomes that are greater than the sum of their parts.*

#### IV. SUMMARY of FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS and SUGGESTIONS

This section recapitulates the recommendations, findings, and suggestions from the text above and indicates the section in which each can be found (as amended in the foregoing text).

Note: A *recommendation* is a formally prescribed course of action for which the Sea Grant Program is accountable. The Sea Grant Program is expected to respond to each recommendation, explaining how it has implemented, how it plans to implement, or why it chooses not to implement each course of action. A *suggestion* is an idea that is presented for consideration. The Sea Grant Program is not accountable for responding to suggestions, but is encouraged to consider implementing those deemed useful and appropriate by program leadership. The *best management practices* identified by the SRT will be shared with other Sea Grant Programs for their potential adoption.

##### Findings:

- **Finding:** Although most of the recommendations of the 2004 Program Assessment Team Report have been effectively addressed, there still are similar concerns that this SRT shares. These are articulated in the rest of the findings, suggestions, and recommendations and should be re-examined during the transition of Directorship of the TXSG Program. [From section “Introduction”]
- **Finding:** The TXSG Advisory Committee serves as an informal source of input on the direction of the Program, helps review pre-proposals, and identifies opportunities for the Program. The Committee meets annually, and the Director seeks input as needs arise. The membership is primarily from academia and agencies. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Leadership”]
- **Finding:** Given the current Director’s area of expertise, the current demands of existing direct reporting to senior administrators, and working relationships among the current personalities in place, the reporting line for the Sea Grant Director within the university appears to be nominally working within the structure of the TAMU organization. However, many other Sea Grant Directors report directly to the Vice President for Research (VPR) or Provost at the campus at which they are hosted, signaling to the external community the stature of the Program. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Organization”]
- **Finding:** The current Director is heavily involved with the research portfolio management with the help of the staff. This allows other staffing to work in other areas of the overall program to the benefit of the program. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Organization”]
- **Finding:** This SRT agrees with the assessment of the 2004 PAT that the off campus location provides many amenities (e.g., easy access for visitors from outside TAMU, modern, spacious, and professional offices that present a professional image to the visitor). This is an efficient office space, with a good tradeoff in expense, due to the off-campus indirect rate. However, the distance from campus still may inhibit some relationships with campus facilities, faculty, staff, and students. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Organization”]
- **Finding:** There is no formal method of recognizing graduate students funded on TXSG research grants. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Organization”]

- **Finding:** Texas has a large and diverse population, as well as a large coastal area. It appears that the state, as a whole, does not recognize the many values found in its coastal zone or does not readily identify with its coast. Some coastal and Great Lake states have developed specific education programs not only for coastal residents and visitors, but also for youth and adult audiences throughout the state. This seems a worthy approach for TXSG. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Organization”]
- **Finding:** The RFP process in place appears to produce an acceptable balance of pre-proposals, full-proposals, and funded projects within Texas academic and research institutions. Many steps are in place to handle conflict-of-interest issues. The Program has a strong base of researchers, many of whom reside in the host institution, which includes TAMU main campus and TAMU-Galveston. Thus, it is not surprising that faculty of the host university are heavily represented among the funded proposals. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Programmed Team Approach”]
- **Finding:** Recent history and potential changes to the TAMU University Research Services may jeopardize the planned research portfolio, including the recruitment of students and gearing up for field seasons. In the past omnibus cycle, there was a delay in processing the award that lasted several months. This is detrimental to proper planning for research and other activities. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Programmed Team Approach”]
- **Finding:** There is a trend towards falling short of the expected balance of funding between competitive research/education and other elements of the program. The guidelines from the NSGO state that approximately 45-65% of the federal core funds are awarded competitively. With the addition of success in regional Sea Grant competitions, the TXSG Program may have met that guideline in some years, but that is largely beyond the control of the Program. In tough financial times, such as these, we realize that this guideline is difficult to follow, but we urge the Program to address this. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Support”]
- **Finding:** Threats to state and university matching funds could jeopardize TXSG’s ability to access federal funding. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Support”]
- **Finding:** Overall, state and federal funding for TXSG is declining or at best leveling off. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Support”]
- **Finding:** State lobbying efforts of the TXSG Director are limited by the University’s government relations office. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Support”]
- **Finding:** The 2004 PAT Report found that the fiscal host, TAMU, collects full indirect costs for the first \$25,000 of each subcontract. Given that TXSG subcontracts out about half of its research funding outside of the home institution to other parts of TAMU system and other Texas institutions, this reduces the amount of funds for research. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Support”]
- **Finding:** The SRT finds that the TXSG Program continues to be a leader in the area of stakeholder engagement, particularly regarding fisheries and seafood, environmental science, marine education, community development, and natural hazards resiliency. However, there are profound changes in demands from both traditional and new sectors, combined with unstable support for delivery of TXSG Extension Program services. [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Extension/Advisory”]

- **Finding:** The partnership between TXSG and Texas AgriLife Extension appears to be a great asset, given that they are responding to similar issues and trends. Current TXSG extension programming, delivery and financial support from Texas AgriLife Extension are a significant intellectual, physical, and financial resource for TXSG. Most extension programs struggle to adjust to new issues while maintaining services for traditional stakeholders and to attempt new methods of delivery of information to stakeholders. [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Extension/Advisory”]
- **Finding:** TAMU is a Land-, Sea- and Space-Grant Institution with missions for research and engagement, in addition to the traditional teaching mission. All mesh closely with the Sea Grant Program. Given that Cooperative Extension reports through Texas AgriLife Extension, not through the University Provost, the TXSG Program seems poised to provide a model and conduit for outreach and engagement within TAMU. [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Extension/Advisory”]
- **Finding:** The work of the TXSG communications has been solid, yet must continually respond to new delivery methods and boast its products on the national level. Conventional methods of communication that target traditional audiences may no longer adequately serve modern audiences, in terms of how and when information is delivered. The velocity of change in audience interest and in tools of communication is both a challenge and an opportunity for Texas Sea Grant. [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Relevance and Relationships”]
- **Finding:** The regional partnership among the Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant Programs for research, communications, and extension are exemplary. The rapid response, flexibility, and cooperation of science-based information in the face of the Gulf Oil Spill Disaster affirmed this. The decision to co-fund 50% of Sea Grant personnel to serve as a research coordinator appears to have made a difference in gathering information and delivering the Regional Research Plan in a timely fashion. [From section “Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities”]
- **Finding:** The interaction between TXSG and the federal and state agencies is strong. Examples include the extension agent on the project at the National Severe Storms Laboratory, a potential agent for the Mission Aransas National Estuarine and Research Reserve, work with the NOAA Fisheries on gear design, Trade Adjustment Assistance with US Department of Agriculture, disaster claims with FEMA, and red drum stock enhancement with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Also, leadership is apparent for the Sea Grant Network in terms of the extension activities. [From section “Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities”]
- **Finding:** As a whole, management leadership to the Sea Grant Network is currently limited to the extension network, and there is only very limited participation by county-based extension agents with regional counterparts and the Sea Grant network. [From section “Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities”]
- **Finding:** The SRT heard tremendous stories of how TXSG Extension was able to connect coastal citizens to federal resources in times of disaster or economic crisis. These included post-hurricane recovery of industry infrastructure and vessels, in addition to longer-term crises of economic issues like the impact of imports via the petition and training for the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program. [From section “Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities”]

**Recommendations (items the Program must consider):**

- **Recommendation:** The TXSG Advisory Committee should have a stronger and more active role in providing input to the Program, such as with strategic planning, program direction with input towards proportional funding of aspects of the overall program, more frequent meetings with Sea Grant staff (virtual or in person), input into the Director’s annual performance evaluation, involvement as needed with the outreach component, and identifying and nurturing external sources of funding. A clear statement is needed for the role of the Advisory Committee with the TXSG Program.

In addition to a stronger role in guiding the Program, a more broadly-based membership for the Advisory Committee is recommended. Membership should include more of the stakeholder community. Examples for consideration as Advisory Committee members include: industry (e.g., tourism, ports and navigation, recreational boating and fishing, nature-based tourism, petroleum production and infrastructure, energy development), trade organizations, chambers of commerce, local elected officials (e.g., county commissioners), and different state agencies (e.g., Texas General Land Office). The Advisory Committee may want to be organized by “type/category,” with periodic rotation of committee members within each classification. There should be a continual “rejuvenation” of the Advisory Committee members, guided by strategic planning and the vision of the revised role of the Advisory Committee. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Leadership”]

- **Recommendation:** The Program should make sure that University administrators are keenly aware of the importance of state matching funds to the receipt of the Federal Sea Grant appropriation. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Support”]
- **Recommendation (continued from the 2004 PAT):** Subcontracts issued to off-campus institutions should carry, at the maximum, the off-campus indirect cost rate rather than the on-campus rate. This allows more program funds to go to program activities. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Support”]
- **Recommendation:** “Visioning” - We recommend that TXSG be forward thinking and visionary to determine its future. The program is at a crossroads, given the recent (and pending) retirements of key staff (including the Director), changes within TAMU, and demographic shifts— these all influence the needs of the state’s coastal areas and the supply of resources available from TXSG. This must be accomplished by using all resources available, including its Advisory Committee, stakeholders, faculty and staff. As such, the TXSG Program should employ a more comprehensive stakeholder survey that encompasses the geographic, topical, and cultural diversity along the Texas coast. These data would help identify information, outreach and research needs (including those for underserved audiences and geographical areas). Survey information, as well as extension agent input, regional and national priorities, and input from a reformulated and reinvigorated advisory committee will allow a clearer vision of the direction of the TXSG program in such a changing “landscape.” The direction and pace of implementation will be determined for the Program’s future and can benefit the new Director and the formulation of the new strategic plan. [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Extension/Advisory”]

**Suggestions (ideas the Program may want to consider):**

- **Suggestion:** With changes in leadership of the Program and possible changes within the TAMU system, flexibility and re-examination of the reporting relationship is strongly encouraged. For example, given the new Director's area of expertise, she may have an appointment in the College of Geosciences, the College of Agriculture and Life Science, or another College. In general, we believe that in order to be effective, a Sea Grant Program needs to report to a higher level, either directly to the VPR/Provost or jointly to the VPR/Provost and the Dean of Geosciences (or applicable college for the new Director). This could generate more support and broader opportunities for TXSG. This supports the recommendation in the 2004 PAT report. [From section "Organizing and Managing the Program – Organization"]
- **Suggestion:** Although budgets are tight, consideration should be given to having a dedicated staff person oversee the research portfolio, depending on the interests of the incoming Director and her overall goals for the program. Relieving the incoming Director of these duties will allow time for strategic planning and partnering opportunities. This supports the recommendation in the 2004 PAT report. [From section "Organizing and Managing the Program – Organization"]
- **Suggestion:** The SRT suggests that TXSG informally re-evaluate whether the current location remains the best model for the TXSG Program and continue to explore options for location of the Program on the main campus. [From section "Organizing and Managing the Program – Organization"]
- **Suggestion:** The program should consider the implementation of a Sea Grant scholar program, or similar, to help publicize Sea Grant graduate student support and facilitate tracking of these students. Such a program provides a "branding" opportunity and provides a special status for the graduate students supported. [From section "Organizing and Managing the Program – Organization"]
- **Suggestion:** Examine new opportunities for educational programming for youth, family and adult coastal and statewide audiences, particularly focusing on underserved audiences. Investigate potential approaches to better understanding how different audiences learn when they can choose when, what, and how to learn (e.g., free-choice learning). Learning is a lifelong activity that is not confined to classrooms, workshops, or conferences, and not limited to students or those seeking professional training. [From section "Organizing and Managing the Program – Organization"]
- **Suggestion:** Continue the practice of in-person visits across the state to meet with potential PIs, but extend to campuses outside of the TAMU and University of Texas systems, including other public and private academic and research institutions that house marine science talent. Also, the use of program development funds could result in more diverse representation of faculty from other Texas institutions. Such program development funds can be used as rapid response funds or for other program development. Guidelines from the NSGO state that program development funds can be no more than 10% of the federal core, in any one year. [From section "Organizing and Managing the Program – Programmed Team Approach"]
- **Suggestion:** Work with NSGO and University Research Services to ensure efficient and effective processes and personnel, perhaps by transitioning to a common SG fiscal platform (e.g., the Maryland or MIT system). These fiscal matters should be seamless and

not jeopardize the planned research. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Programmed Team Approach”]

- **Suggestion:** The Director and staff should explore the options for acquiring additional funding from all sources, including federal and state agencies not ordinarily approached, as well as foundations and private donations. Agency funding would be directed through the University’s sponsored projects office as with regular grants, while private donations and foundation support may necessitate working with the University’s development office. Private fundraising is a new frontier for most Sea Grant programs, but one that will likely become increasingly important in the future. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Support”]
- **Suggestion:** The Director should work with the University’s government relations office to optimize state lobbying procedures for TXSG, with potential joint visits of University and Sea Grant staff to legislative offices. Federal lobbying efforts should continue as currently carried out, but also in coordination with University government relations staff. [From section “Organizing and Managing the Program – Support”]
- **Suggestion:** Continue to nurture a strong working relationship with Texas AgriLife Extension and encourage reporting of impacts that reflect both AgriLife and TXSG in their mutual and separate reporting systems and impacts. Encourage the active participation of AgriLife leadership at the state and local areas in the visioning processes. Although no formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between TXSG and Texas AgriLife Extension appears to be in place, the current Associate Director/Extension Program Leader fosters an excellent working relationship between the two entities, having worked for Texas AgriLife Extension prior to his current appointment. Yet, the SRT suggests that a formal MOU would be useful, in case of staffing changes (this is a similar recommendation of the 2004 PAT). [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Extension/Advisory”]
- **Suggestion:** Develop significant interactions of its extension personnel in activities, in planning, in research and in engagement with relevant academic units of the university, particularly with the College of Geosciences and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Include promising interactions with non-traditional schools and Departments, such as the Department of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning, the Bush School of Government and Public Service, the College of Education and Human Development, and the Mays Business School. [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Extension/Advisory”]
- **Suggestion:** We suggest that TXSG continue to investigate the application of new communication tools (e.g., smartphone apps, social media) for extension personnel, educators and communicators. Also, TXSG should consider a range of options for electronic publication of Texas Shores, based on assessing audiences and use of new technology. A static electronic newsletter version of Texas Shores is just one use of the many electronic media to reach today’s audiences. The outcomes from these new and existing communications avenues should routinely be submitted to the National Sea Grant Library and the National Sea Grant Office. [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Relevance and Relationships”]
- **Suggestion:** Continue these important interactions and re-consider the future of the NSSL agent and the future NERR agent, and look for opportunities to continue these interactions as employees retire. Continue to work to formalize an engagement effort

with FEMA to provide significant local expertise before disasters arise. [From section “Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities”]

- **Suggestion** Re-consider the amount of management team efforts devoted to similar efforts across the Sea Grant Network and county-based agents contributing to larger networks. The SRT realizes that restrictions on travel funds and other issues exist; however, interactions with Sea Grant colleagues represent career development and beneficial ‘cross-fertilization’ with other agents who work on similar topics. Such collaborations could benefit their day-to-day activities and the Sea Grant Network. From section “Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities”]
- **Suggestion:** In order to be able to remain flexible in the face of these issues, time and program funds must be committed. The SRT suggests that a process be formalized to capture expenses devoted to disaster response and lost work/revenues and SG personnel receive training in order to expedite future claims to re-coup these costs. [From section “Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities”]

## V. BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:

The best management practices identified by the SRT will be shared with other Sea Grant Programs.

- **Best Management Practice:** The Floating Classroom and application of volunteer efforts (e.g., Texas Master Naturalists, Red Tide Rangers) are worthy of national dissemination to other Sea Grant Programs for their consideration. [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Extension/Advisory”]
- **Best Management Practice:** The TXSG Program continues to be a national leader in providing technical and outreach capacity building for public policy leaders in coastal communities and in natural hazards recovery for communities of place (e.g., geographic, ethnic) and communities of interest (e.g., boating and fishing boat recovery after coastal storms). [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Extension/Advisory”]
- **Best Management Practice:** The SRT was impressed by the impacts presented by the various extension projects during the site visit. By capturing these in writing to produce succinct, meaningful impact statements, TXSG efficiently informs the Sea Grant Network and the NSGO of the significant accomplishments. The SRT suggests that this serve as a model for other Sea Grant Programs on how to construct meaningful impact statements that reflect their accomplishments. [From section “Stakeholder Engagement– Extension/Advisory”]
- **Best Management Practice:** The SRT heard that many of the employees in NOAA have had some Sea Grant support in their career. The efforts that TXSG has taken to educate future ocean leaders in the Knauss Fellowship program likely will pay tremendous dividends. This includes on-boarding for TX fellows and ‘SG 101’ training for the larger Knauss cohort. A small commitment of staff time and the fellow’s time to meet extension agents and stakeholders and participate in research conferences and panels will help communicate the impact of Sea Grant. [From section “Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities”]
- **Best Management Practice:** This regional partnership should be aspired to by the other Sea Grant Regions. Cooperatively funding regional sea grant programs has yielded outcomes that are greater than the sum of their parts. [From section “Collaborative Network/NOAA Activities”]

## **APPENDIX I - Texas Site Review Team (SRT) Brief Biographies (10-11 May 2011)**

**Gene W. Kim (SRT Chair; National Sea Grant Office, NSGO)** - Gene Kim is the federal program officer for the Gulf of Mexico Sea Grant Programs (TX, LA, MS-AL, FL, National Sea Grant Law Center) and NSGO Program Director for Aquaculture. Based in Silver Spring, MD, he also directs the NSGO aquaculture competitive grants, collaborates with the NOAA-NMFS Aquaculture Program, coordinates and chairs several NOAA international aquaculture exchange programs, and orchestrates a national network of Sea Grant aquaculture extension agents. His work experience includes the NOAA Research Office of Policy, Planning, and Evaluation (NOAA Ecosystem Research Program Coordinator), the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee's Fisheries Wildlife, and Oceans Subcommittee (Knauss Legislative Fellow), and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Peer Review Coordinator). He holds a Ph.D. from The Ohio State University where he focused on fisheries and aquaculture issues: water quality, invasive species, benthic communities, and dietary transfer of organic contaminants. His MS research at Auburn University examined larval fish ecology and his undergraduate studies at Miami University yielded degrees in Zoology (BS) and Philosophy (BA).

**Nancy N. Rabalais (SRT Co-Chair; National Sea Grant Advisory Board Member)** - Nancy Rabalais is the Executive Director and a Professor at the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON). Dr. Rabalais' research interests include the dynamics of hypoxic environments, interactions of large rivers with the coastal ocean, estuarine and coastal eutrophication, benthic ecology, and science policy. She is an author of 3 books, 29 book chapters, and over 100 peer-reviewed publications. She is active in many panels, advisory boards, and professional organizations. She currently serves on a National Research Council committee, the Council for the University-National Oceanographic Laboratories, the Executive Board for the Consortium on Ocean Leadership, the National Sea Grant Advisory Board, and Board of Directors for the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System. Dr. Rabalais is an American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow, an Aldo Leopold Leadership Program Fellow, and a National Associate of the National Academies of Science and has earned several research awards. She earned her Ph.D. in Zoology from The University of Texas at Austin in 1983.

**James W. Ammerman (SRT member; New York Sea Grant Director)** - Jim Ammerman has been the Director of New York Sea Grant since 2008 and is located at Stony Brook University. He is an aquatic microbial ecologist and biogeochemist, and received his Ph.D. from Scripps Institution of Oceanography. He has been a member of the research faculty at Rutgers University, the faculty at Texas A&M University, and the research staff at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University. He has conducted extensive studies of nutrient cycling in the coastal zone of Louisiana in the area of the "dead zone." Jim Ammerman served as an Associate Program Manager in the Biological Oceanography Program at the National Science Foundation and as Science Director of NOAA's Undersea Research Center at Rutgers University. He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a recipient of the Lindeman Award from the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography.

**Jay Rasmussen (SRT external member)** - Jay Rasmussen was Oregon Sea Grant's Associate Director and Program Leader for Sea Grant Extension for 13 years retiring in 2009. In that role he provided leadership for 27 extension and education faculty agents and specialists throughout western Oregon and shared a faculty member each with California and with Alaska. He received the Sea Grant Association's Wick Award for Visionary Leadership in Administration in 2009 and the OSU Extension Administration Leadership Award in 2008. He has been Chair-Elect, Chair, and Past-Chair of the Assembly of Sea Grant Extension Program Leaders. Before coming to Sea Grant, he was the director of the Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association (OCZMA), an organization of coastal local governments. He served as a member of the Oregon Ocean Policy Council and chaired its Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee. Recently he completed two terms as a member of the governor-appointed, senate-confirmed Oregon Water Resources Commission. Jay has also served as a member of the Board of Directors and chair for the Oregon Coast Aquarium.

**Brian Allee (SRT External member)** – Dr. Brian Allee is a fisheries biologist working for NOAA Fisheries on the Mitchell Act funding of agency and tribal programs on hatchery production, monitoring and evaluation, hatchery reform and fish screens and fish passage in the Columbia River Basin. He retired from the University of Alaska Fairbanks as director of the Alaska Sea Grant College Program. He was Executive Director of the Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority, Director of the Fisheries Rehabilitation, Enhancement and Development Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and President of the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation. He received his Ph.D. in fisheries from the University of Washington. During his over 40 year professional career, he has worked extensively with salmonid fish specializing in freshwater, estuarine, and marine ecosystems in Alaska, Washington and Oregon. Trained as a fisheries scientist, Dr. Allee has expertise in salmonid ecological interactions, restoration, supplementation, enhancement, fish culture, hatchery reform and aquaculture. He has had broad management experience at the policy and technical level supervising large and small organizations in the university, public (state, federal and tribal), private, and private non-profit sectors.

**Lauren Land (SRT Observer)** - Lauren Land is a 2011 Knauss Marine Policy Fellow in the National Sea Grant Office. She helps coordinate and support the Sustainable Coastal Development and Hazard Resilience in Coastal Communities focus areas. Lauren earned a MS degree in Oceanography and Coastal Sciences from Louisiana State University. Her research looked at the impacts of two soil-stabilizing amendments on physical aggregation and microbial activity of three coastal wetland sediments. Lauren received her BS in Environmental Science and Policy from the University of Maryland in College Park.

**APPENDIX II – Site Review Team Agenda, National Sea Grant Site Review of the Texas Sea Grant College Program, 10-11 May 2011, College Station, TX**

Tuesday, May 10

- 8:00 Site Review Team picked up at hotel
- 8:15 SRT arrives at Texas Sea Grant offices
- 8:30-8:45 Program Officer Remarks (Gene Kim)
- 8:45-9:45 Meeting with Texas Sea Grant Management Team (Robert Stickney, Logan Respass, Jim Hiney, Terry Poehl)
- 9:45-10:00 Break.
- 10:00-11:00 Panel 1: Education  
*Leader: Liz Turner*
  1. *Floating Classroom Program*
    - a. *Russ Miget*
    - b. *FCP partnering teacher (TBD)*
  2. *National Ocean Sciences Bowl*
  3. *Texas Master Naturalists*
    - a. *Julie Massey*
    - b. *Dick Benoit (GBATMN)*
  4. *Schools adopting curriculum*
  5. *Puddle Duck Racer program*
    - a. *Rhonda Cummins*
    - b. *Our Lady of the Gulf Principal (TBD)*
- 11:00-11:30 Meeting/conference call with Advisory Committee members.  
*Leader: Robert Stickney*
  1. *Larry McKinney (Chair) – by telephone*
  2. *Chris Dorsett (Ocean Conservancy)*
  3. *Jim Lester (Houston Advanced Research Center)*
  4. *Billy Harris (Water Resources Institute)*
- 11:30-12:30 Working lunch
  1. *SRT*
  2. *Sea Grant Administration*
  3. *Advisory Committee members*
  4. *Monty Dozier (AgriLife Extension Service)*
- 12:30-1:30 Panel 2: Healthy Coastal Ecosystems  
*Leader: Julie Massey*
  1. *State park restoration post-Ike*

- a. *Dick Benoit (GBATMN)*
- 2. *Valley projects*
  - a. *Tony Reisinger*
  - b. *Volunteer Partner (TBD)*
- 3. *MRRP*
  - a. *John O'Connell*
  - b. *MRRP Volunteer (TBD)*
- 4. *Clean Marinas/Clean Boaters*
  - a. *Dewayne Hollin*
  - b. *Helen Paige (Marina Bay Harbor)*

1:30-2:30      Panel 3: Safe and Sustainable Seafood Supply

*Leader: Mike Haby*

- 1. *Trawl gear modification and fuel savings*
  - a. *Jim Nance*
  - b. *Gary Graham*
  - c. *Patrick Riley*
- 2. *Trade Adjustment Assistance Program*
  - a. *Mike Haby*
  - b. *Partner (TBD)*
- 3. *Aquaculture short course*
  - a. *Granvil Treece*
  - b. *Texas Aquaculture Assoc. Partner (TBD)*
- 4. *Aquaculture research*
  - a. *Delbert Gatlin (Wildlife & Fisheries TAMU)*
  - b. *Bill Neill (Wildlife & Fisheries TAMU)*
  - c. *Robert Vega (Texas Parks and Wildlife)*

2:30-2:45      Break

2:45-3:30      Panel 4: Rapid Response examples

*Leader: Robert Stickney*

- 1. *Invertebrate collection*
  - a. *Robert Stickney*
  - b. *Mary Wickstein*
- 2. *iGeo*
  - a. *Liz Turner*
  - b. *Sonia Garcia*
- 3. *U.S. Japan Natural Resources Aquaculture subcommittee*
  - a. *Robert Stickney*
  - b. *Mike Rust (Northwest Fisheries Science Center via telephone)*
- 4. *HOW/HACCP*
  - a. *Mike Haby*
  - b. *Seafood industry partner (TBD)*
- 5. *Web site development/maintenance*

- 3:30-4:00 Travel to TAMU campus
- 4:00-5:00 Meet with TAMU administrators
- 5:00 Reception on TAMU campus
- 6:30 Adjourn

Wednesday, May 11

- 8:00 SRT picked up at hotel
- 8:30-9:30 Panel 5: Sustainable Coastal Development
  - Leader: John Jacob*
  - 1. *Coastal Planning Atlas (research)*
    - a. *Sam Brody (TAMU-G via telephone)*
  - 2. *Leadership – Matagorda County*
    - a. *John O’Connell*
    - b. *LMC Volunteer*
  - 3. *Smart Growth*
    - a. *John Jacob*
    - b. *Jeff Taebel (Houston Galveston Area Council via phone)*
  - 4. *Sea Grant – MANEER Partnership*
    - a. *Logan Respess*
    - b. *Sally Morehead*
- 9:30-10:30 Panel 6: Hazard Resiliency in Coastal Communities
  - Leader: Terrie Looney*
  - 1. *Post-Ike – Oak Island*
    - a. *Terrie Looney*
    - b. *Oak Island Partner (TBD)*
  - 2. *Post-Ike – Oyster survey*
    - a. *Mike Haby*
    - b. *Oyster Survey Partner (TBD)*
  - 3. *Vessel Recovery Program*
    - a. *Rhonda Cummins*
  - 4. *CIE-FLOW model involvement*
    - a. *Suzanne Van Cooten (NSSL) – via telephone*
    - b. *Kodi Nemunaitis (NSSL)*
  - 5. *Research*
    - a. *Jennifer Irish (TAMU Coastal Engineering Lab)*
  - 6. *Rip current public awareness campaign*
    - a. *Cindie Powell*
- 10:30-10:45 Break

- 10:45-11:15 Panel 7: Regional Research (Via telephone)  
*Leader: Robert Stickney*  
*1. Chuck Wilson (Louisiana SG Director)*  
*2. Karl Havens (Florida SG Director)*  
*3. LaDon Swann (MS/AL SG Director)*  
*4. Steve Sempier (MS/AL SG)*
- 11:15-11:45 Conference Call: Regional Outreach
- 11:45-1:00 SRT Working Lunch
- 1:00-3:30 SRT Writing
- 3:30-4:00 Debriefing for Texas Sea Grant Administration
- 4:00-4:30 Debriefing for Dean of Geosciences (Kate Miller)
- 4:30 Adjourn