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UTSA BIOLOGY STUDENTS EXPLORE THE GULF OF MEXICO

Field trip to Port Aransas lets students observe marine life first-hand

(San Antonio)—Thirteen students in the biology department at The University of Texas at San Antonio took to the high seas to get a first-hand look at marine life in the Gulf of Mexico. The two-day excursion, the first of two annual field trips to Port Aransas, has been taking place for the last seven years under the leadership of Jyotsna Sharma, a biology research professor at UTSA.

“I think it’s important for the students to be aware of our changing environments and the impact we have on the world around us,” said Sharma. “Our students learn about the diversity of marine organisms and their habitats.”

The field trips allow students to familiarize themselves with potential job opportunities by networking with researchers and biologists at local marine research facilities, fish and wildlife departments, parks and wildlife groups and various private organizations. Students sleep in the dorms in Port Aransas and spend the rest of the time walking the beaches, jetties and mud flats gathering samples for observation and trawling at sea for marine life aboard a research vessel.

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“It was amazing and makes you appreciate all the things you learn in the lab when you see people using those same techniques out in the field,” said Michael Cavazos, junior biology major.

The field trips are open to biology and environmental science students who have completed the introductory biology classes. Anyone interested in attending the next field trip in January should contact the UTSA Department of Biology at 458-4458.

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The University of Texas at San Antonio is one of the premier institutions of higher education in South Texas and one of the fastest growing universities in the state. One of nine academic universities and six health institutions that comprise the UT System, UTSA is the second largest institution in the system. Celebrating its 37th anniversary, UTSA serves more than 28,500 students enrolled in 62 bachelor's, 43 master's and 19 doctoral degree programs.

Programs are offered through the colleges of Architecture, Business, Education and Human Development, Engineering, Honors, Liberal and Fine Arts, Public Policy, and Sciences, and the Graduate School. A Top 100 Hispanic-serving institution, UTSA is ranked among the top 10. A university of access and excellence, UTSA is committed to research and discovery, teaching and learning, and public service.