



“Scientific Opportunities for a Global Algal Revolution”

Program and Book of Abstracts

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production or a sustainable polysaccharide industry, and become part of the solution of our plastics problem creating biodegradable single use plastics. In this presentation we will discuss the hype and hear many examples from the past which can be lessons for the future.

KEYNOTE

What can the Gulf of Mexico and Panama tell us about education and outreach?

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A series of research grants funded by the National Science Foundation involved a major component about education and outreach as it pertained to marine algal diversity. These included comprehensive studies into 1) the diversity of the deep bank marine algae in the Gulf of Mexico (NSF Biodiversity Surveys and Inventories program) and the discovery of unsuspected eukaryotic life inhabiting rhodolith-forming coralline algae (NSF DEB), 2) monographic research (NSF PEET), 3) advanced tropical phycology with the integration of modern and traditional techniques in the study of tropical algae of Panama (NSF PASI), among others.

Education was very closely tied to outreach. Outreach included 1) field experience for undergraduate and graduate students in coastal and offshore subtropical and tropical marine environments; 2) high school teacher education focused on the inclusion of algae into high school biology curricula, 3) on-site high school and grade school visits with students' hands-on interaction with marine algae and algal products, 4) mentored research for undergraduate students in molecular phylogenetics and algal morphology that included research presentation at multiple venues and publications.

Algae are wonderful organisms to convey fundamental biological concepts that can serve as a foundation to many career pathways.