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## Grant to AASU Will Enhance Quality of Teaching in Georgia Schools

(May 24, 2010) Armstrong Atlantic State University's (AASU) [College of Education](#), in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, the Georgia Aquarium and the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, has been awarded a \$67,572 grant to support two workshops designed to equip kindergarten through 12th grade teachers with the tools to effectively incorporate in their teaching information about the importance of Georgia's watersheds and coastal areas.

“This is not a usual workshop that takes place in a classroom,” said Patricia Wachholz, AASU dean of the College of Education and principal investigator of the grant. “The rivers and the reefs are going to be the classrooms and participating teachers will be able to inject new energy and knowledge into their teaching as it relates to Georgia's rivers and coastal environments.”

Rivers to Reef, a program by NOAA and the Georgia Aquarium, works with dozens of teachers every year by raising their awareness about the state's natural aquatic environments. The initiative is designed to empower science educators with the knowledge necessary to engage students with the natural environment, raise awareness about local habitats, and learn about water conservation issues.

The grant will support 32 teachers during two, six-day workshops exploring the Altamaha River system from its headwaters in Atlanta to the coastal area. Field experiences include water quality monitoring at various field sites statewide, a canoeing trip to the convergence of the Oconee and Ocmulgee Rivers, a boat ride through the Altamaha River Delta to explore the watershed that directly influences Gray's Reef, a trawling trip through the marsh, and an excursion on Sapelo Island to explore its marshes, ecology and culture.

Grant partners include Kim Morris-Zarneke, manager of education programs at Georgia Aquarium; Cathy Sakas, education coordinator for Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary; and Marc Frischer, professor at Skidaway Institute of Oceanography.

Michael Mahan, AASU assistant professor of [middle and secondary education](#), will serve as lead program evaluator.

“This provides an opportunity for teachers to understand the importance and vitality of our watersheds so that they can bring lessons into the classrooms and improve their teaching methods in regard to science and the environment,” said Mahan.

Funding for the grant comes from Georgia's Teacher Quality Higher Education Program, which is managed by the University of Georgia for the Board of Regents of the [University System of Georgia](#). Funding to support the program comes to the Georgia Board of Regents from the United States Department of Education.

Georgia's Teacher Quality Higher Education Program funds are used to enhance the teaching of science, mathematics, language arts, reading, and social studies at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in public and private schools.



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