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[College of Education Professor Awarded Inaugural National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Fellowship](#)

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Lacey D. Huffling, Ph.D., associate professor in the College of Education at Georgia Southern University, has been awarded a Gulf Research Program Early-Career Research Fellowship from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

As one of four fellows who join the inaugural cohort of the education research track, Huffling will contribute to the advancement of K-12 educational equity related to science and environmental literacy by considering the impact of recent disasters on educational opportunities for students in vulnerable Gulf Coast or Alaskan communities.

“This fellowship is important as it is the first education research track cohort offered by the Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Early-Career Research Fellowship,” said Huffling. “It is exciting to see that educational research is being supported to further the interdisciplinary lens of the fellowship program, and it is an honor to have been selected. With this fellowship, I plan to continue to research and advocate for the advancement of equitable science and environmental learning in rural areas.”

Huffling’s research examines the affordances and barriers historically marginalized communities experience in acquiring science and environmental literacy in K-20 educational settings. Most recently, Huffling worked with her team at Georgia Southern to research and create a teacher professional development program for rural science teachers from watersheds that flowed into the Gulf of Mexico.

The Gulf Research Program’s Early-Career Research Fellowship helps researchers during the critical early career phases. Fellows receive a \$76,000 financial award along with mentoring support to provide them with independence, flexibility and a built-in support network as they take risks on untested research ideas, pursue unique collaborations and build a network of colleagues.

“These exceptional individuals are working hard to pursue new research, technical capabilities and approaches that address some of the greatest challenges facing the Gulf and Alaska regions today,” said Karena Mary Mothershed, senior program manager for the Gulf Research Program’s Board on Gulf Education and Engagement. “We are incredibly excited to announce these new Early-Career Research Fellows, and to continue supporting them as they make lasting impacts.”