



# University of South Alabama

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## Dr. Steve Picou Appointed to NAS Advisory Group for Gulf of Mexico Program



Dr. Steve Picou

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Dr. Steve Picou, professor of sociology, anthropology and social work and director of the USA Coastal Resource and Resiliency Center, has been appointed to serve as an advisor to the National Academy of Sciences' new Gulf of Mexico program.

Picou, who is recognized internationally for his extensive academic research into the impact of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska, will help to develop a vision for the new program as part of the advisory group. His appointment is for one year.

The advisory group will create a strategic vision and guide the program's development and implementation. It will also articulate the program's mission, goals, and objectives, including preliminary thinking about metrics to measure its impacts and to outline how the program will operate in the first three to five years.

The 24-member group will draw on the science, engineering, and health expertise of the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, and National

Research Council. Chaired by outgoing NAS Vice President Barbara A. Schaal, dean of arts and sciences at Washington University in St. Louis, the group includes people with experiences in academia and industry, as well as people with deep connections to the Gulf region.

"The advisory group brings distinction, expertise from diverse disciplines, and a wide range of experience to the task of defining the program," said NAS President Ralph J. Cicerone. "With Dr. Schaal's leadership and her familiarity with the National Academy of Sciences and its values, we're confident that the program's design will be based on scientific merit and integrity."

The \$500 million, 30-year program was established as part of the settlements of federal criminal complaints against British Petroleum and Transocean Ltd. following the 2010 Deepwater Horizon explosion, which resulted in 11 deaths, 17 injuries, and the largest oil spill in U.S. history. The program will focus on human health, environmental protection, and oil system safety in the Gulf of Mexico and the United States' Outer Continental Shelf, and will fund and carry out studies, projects, and activities in research and development, education and training, and environmental monitoring.

To identify broad opportunities in these areas that best meet the program's charge, the advisory

group will work to understand what other organizations and agencies are doing in the Gulf region. As part of its information gathering activities, the group will conduct a series of in-person and virtual meetings in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Washington, D.C., to identify how the NAS program can make useful and lasting contributions.

The program will be run under the auspices of the National Research Council, the principal operating arm of the NAS and NAE. Together with the IOM, these private, nonprofit institutions provide science, technology, and health policy advice under a congressional charter granted to NAS in 1863.



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