Gulf and Caribbean Research

Volume 34 | Issue 1

2023

Jonathan Franco López 1955 – 2023

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GULF AND CARIBBEAN

RESEARCH

Volume 34
2023
ISSN: 2572-1410

Published by

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

GULF COAST RESEARCH LABORATORY
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Jonathan Franco López

July 27, 1955 — June 7, 2023

Jonathan Franco López was born in Mexico City, Mexico, and raised in a working—class family. When he reached secondary and higher education, his path placed him in innovative school projects for his time: Colegio de Ciencias y Humanidades (CCH) and then the beginning of the Biology degree program of the then Escuela Nacional de Estudios Profesionaless Iztacala (ENEPI), both programs of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Jonathan received his B.S. in Biology from ENEPI in 1981, and 14 years later completed his MS degree in 1995 from the Facultad de Ciencias at UNAM in Mexico City.

A member of the first generation of biology students at ENEPI, Jonathan used the novel (and incomplete) facilities of the campus; anecdotes from that time indicate that many of his contemporaries walked among the cornfields, in addition to having as occasional classmates the cows that escaped from the neighboring stables to a school without fences. He also experienced his professional education on a campus remote from the main university in Mexico City. At that time, calling ENEPI a "foreign" campus seemed appropriate; in the valley of Mexico distances were still measured in time rather than length. The ENEPI eventually became FES (Facultad Estudios Superiores) Iztacala, a master's degree granting institution under the auspices of UNAM. In the absence of leading figures on campus, Jonathan and the young professors who founded FES Iztacala with him gave the campus the touch that has since characterized it of focusing on academic programs.

The young Franco López joined the histology teaching staff at ENEP Iztacala, and then taught Zoology courses; in both cases when he was still a student in the last semesters of his BS degree. During this time, he developed his first approaches to teaching, an activity that he refined throughout his academic life. Jonathan and other forward—looking young instructors, such as Adolfo Cruz Gómez, strengthened and consolidated the area of ecology within the developing university, both in the old curriculum with subjects such as ecology and conservation, and with the addition of field biology through new elective courses related to marine and aquatic ecology. The ecology program of FES Iztacala was initially made up of instructors that graduated mainly from the School of Biological Sciences of the National Polytechnic Institute (IPN). However, graduates from ENEPI and the subsequent FES Iztacala joining the ecology faculty promoted the consolidation of the teaching staff and actively participated in the modifications of the Biology study plan, including the curriculum currently in place. Overall, Jonathan spent over 40 years teaching in the Ecology program at ENEPI/FES Iztacala.

Dr. Gustavo de la Cruz Agüero (now at the Autonomous University of Baja California Sur), was a key figure in creating the line of research at FES Iztacala in which Jonathan became involved and expanded for more than 40 years: ecological processes in estuaries. Around 1978, at the suggestion of Prof. de la Cruz Agüero, Jonathan and a team of young instructors began the academic journey through the Veracruz estuaries that continues today after almost 45 years. These long—term studies have generated knowledge regarding ecological processes in estuaries, and continue to create learning experiences for FES Iztacala Biology students in the Tamiahua, Laguna Grande, Mandinga, Alvarado, and Sontecomapan lagoons as well as the Tecolutla, Casitas, and Jamapa estuaries in the southern Gulf of Mexico. All of these systems are in Veracruz state. In these estuaries, apart from completing his training as a researcher, Jonathan contributed to the training of at least 254 undergraduate students, many of whom completed their academic training under his tutelage.

Jonathan developed his main research activities in estuarine fish ecology in the lagoons and estuaries of Veracruz, resulting in hundreds of presentations shared at scientific events, conferences, and courses, as well as peer—

reviewed publications and collaborations in books published by the government. In the later years of his career, he also specialized in environmental impact, in which he achieved recognition as a Specialized Expert, publishing books and manuals on the subject. He also trained an additional large group of biologists in this field.

Jonathan initiated and supported collaborations with US scientists for the betterment of his students and the Faculty within FES Iztacala–UNAM. For example, Nancy J. Brown–Peterson and Mark S. Peterson (co–editors of *Gulf and Caribbean Research*) completed 2 Academic Exchange Programs (9 October–9 November 2002 and 4–18 October 2003) at UNAM–Iztacala that Jonathan hosted. During this collaboration period, they taught classes in fisheries and statistics, worked with faculty on data analysis and subsequent publications, and established a long–lasting friendship with scientists at FES Iztacala. Most importantly, this academic exchange program resulted in developing a project to publish B.S. thesis papers in *Gulf and Caribbean Research*. Through translation and critical peer–review, 6 theses based on research completed by undergraduate students and their Faculty advisors were submitted, revised and published in 2004–2005. An additional 4 research publications by FES Iztacala faculty, staff and graduate students were also published during this collaborative effort (Table 1).

When an obituary is written, we should pay less attention to the time that separates the dates of birth and departure, and instead measure the efforts, ideas and commitments with which that person carried out all the actions that mark their life journey and for which they will be remembered. There is no doubt that the life of Professor Jonathan Franco López is full of innumerable personal, individual and collective relationships, during which he contributed to the consolidation of biology and ecology within FES Iztacala–UNAM. Jonathan is survived by his wife (Rocío Zamudio Arciniega), sons (Jonathan Franco Clayen and Maximiliano Franco Zamudio) and many faculty, colleagues and students who will miss him dearly.

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TABLE 1. List of collaborative publications from FES Iztacala students, faculty and staff in Gulf and Caribbean Research. Jonathan Franco López was instrumental in ensuring the publication of these papers. *undergraduate student thesis

Volume 16(1) (2004)

1. Introduction to special section on research activities at the Iztacala Campus of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México. Mark S. Peterson and Nancy J. Brown-Peterson. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1601.12
2. Overview of study areas and UNAM-Iztacala student research. Jonathan Franco-Lopez and Jose Antonio Martinez-Perez. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1601.13
3. Trophic comparison of two species of Needlefish (Belonidae) in the Alvarado Lagoonal System, Veracruz, Mexico. Daniel Arceo-Carranza*, Jonathan Franco-Lopez, Gretchen L. Waggy, and Rafael Chavez-Lopez. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1601.14
4. Feeding habits and sexual dimorphism of the Violet Goby, *Gobioides broussoneti* Lacepede (Pisces: Gobiidae), in the estuarine system of Tecolutla, Veracruz, Mexico. Sergio Mata-Cortes*, Jose Antonio Martinez-Perez, and Mark S. Peterson. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1601.15
5. Gonadal development and sexual dimorphism of *Gobiomorus dormitor* from the estuarine system of Tecolutla, Veracruz, Mexico. Raquel Hernandez-Saavedra*, Jose Antonio Martinez-Perez, Nancy J. Brown-Peterson, and Mark S. Peterson. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1601.16
6. Reproductive biology of the Opossum Pipefish, *Microphis brachyurus lineatus*, in Tecolutla Estuary, Veracruz, Mexico. Martha Edith Miranda-Marure*, Jose Antonio Martinez-Perez, and Nancy J. Brown-Peterson. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1601.17
7. Reproductive structures and early life history of the Gulf Toadfish, *Opsanus beta*, in the Tecolutla Estuary, Veracruz, Mexico. Alfredo Gallardo-Torres*, Jose Antonio Martinez-Perez, and Brian J. Lezina. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1601.18
8. Helminths from *Dormitator maculatus* (Pisces: Eleotridae) in Alvarado Lagoon, Veracruz, Mexico, and supplemental data for *Clinostomum complanatum* Rudolphi, 1814 from *Egretta caerulea* (Aves: Ardeidae). Jesus Montoya-Mendoza, Rafael Chavez-Lopez, and Jonathan Franco-Lopez. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1601.19

Volume 17(1) (2005)

9. Introduction to special section on research activities at the Iztacala Campus of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México. Mark S. Peterson and Nancy J. Brown-Peterson. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1701.12
10. Ecology of the Mayan Cichlid, *Cichlasoma urophthalmus* Günther, in the Alvarado Lagoonal System, Veracruz, Mexico. Rafael Chavez-Lopez, Mark S. Peterson, Nancy J. Brown-Peterson, Ana Adalia Morales-Gomez, and Jonathan Franco-Lopez. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1701.13
11. Seasonal and spatial patterns in salinity, nutrients, and Chlorophyll a in the Alvarado Lagoonal System, Veracruz, Mexico. Angel Moran-Silva, Luis Antonio Martinez Franco, Rafael Chavez-Lopez, Jonathan Franco-Lopez, Carlos M. Bedia-Sanchez, Francisco Contreras Espinosa, Francisco Gutierrez Mendieta, Nancy J. Brown-Peterson, and Mark S. Peterson. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1701.14
12. Long-term fish assemblage dynamics of the Alvarado Lagoon Estuary, Veracruz, Mexico. Rafael Chavez-Lopez, Jonathan Franco-Lopez, Angel Moran-Silva, and Martin T. O'Connell. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1701.15
13. Trophic relationships of demersal fishes in the shrimping zone off Alvarado Lagoon, Veracruz, Mexico. Edgar Pelaez-Rodriguez*, Jonathan Franco-Lopez, Wilfredo A. Matamoros, Rafael Chavez-Lopez, and Nancy J. Brown-Peterson. https://doi.org/10.18785/gcr.1701.16