The UNOLS Marine Technician Pool

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Why have a pool?

- Downsizing of fleet means potential loss of expertise

- Today's workforce more mobile than previously

- Gives technical managers more flexibility in finding technical expertise at short notice

- Reduces problems inherent in hiring short-term personnel, including availability, contracts, payments

- Makes it easier to arrange technician exchange between ships

Potential Advantages

- Streamlines inefficiencies in providing needed manpower

- Allows for training of workers in new areas by pairing them with more experienced personnel

- Serves as potential source for new, fulltime technicians as positions within the fleet open up

- Increases informal technology knowledge transfer

- Lets technicians work on multiple vessels

- Lets technicians work part-time if desired

How does it work?

- Following an initial experimental period from 2012, Texas A&M University (TAMU) set up as clearing house for program, starting in early 2016

- Work closely with UNOLS Technical Support Manager who coordinates with ship operating institutions and schedules deployments

- Technicians considered independent contractors

- TAMU arranges individual contracts with personnel for each cruise/operation and handles all invoices, payments, workmans' comp and liability insurance, etc.

How does it work? (2)

- Contracts based on one-year service agreements but with separate contracts for each cruise, spelling out expectations

- Technicians appointed to pool at a standard day rate based on experience and abilities (based on 8 h/day ashore, 12 h/day at sea)

- Technicians responsible for own medical insurance coverage

- Technicians eligible for training workshops/meetings if work >100 days/yr at sea

- Work not guaranteed

Cruises supported 2012-2016
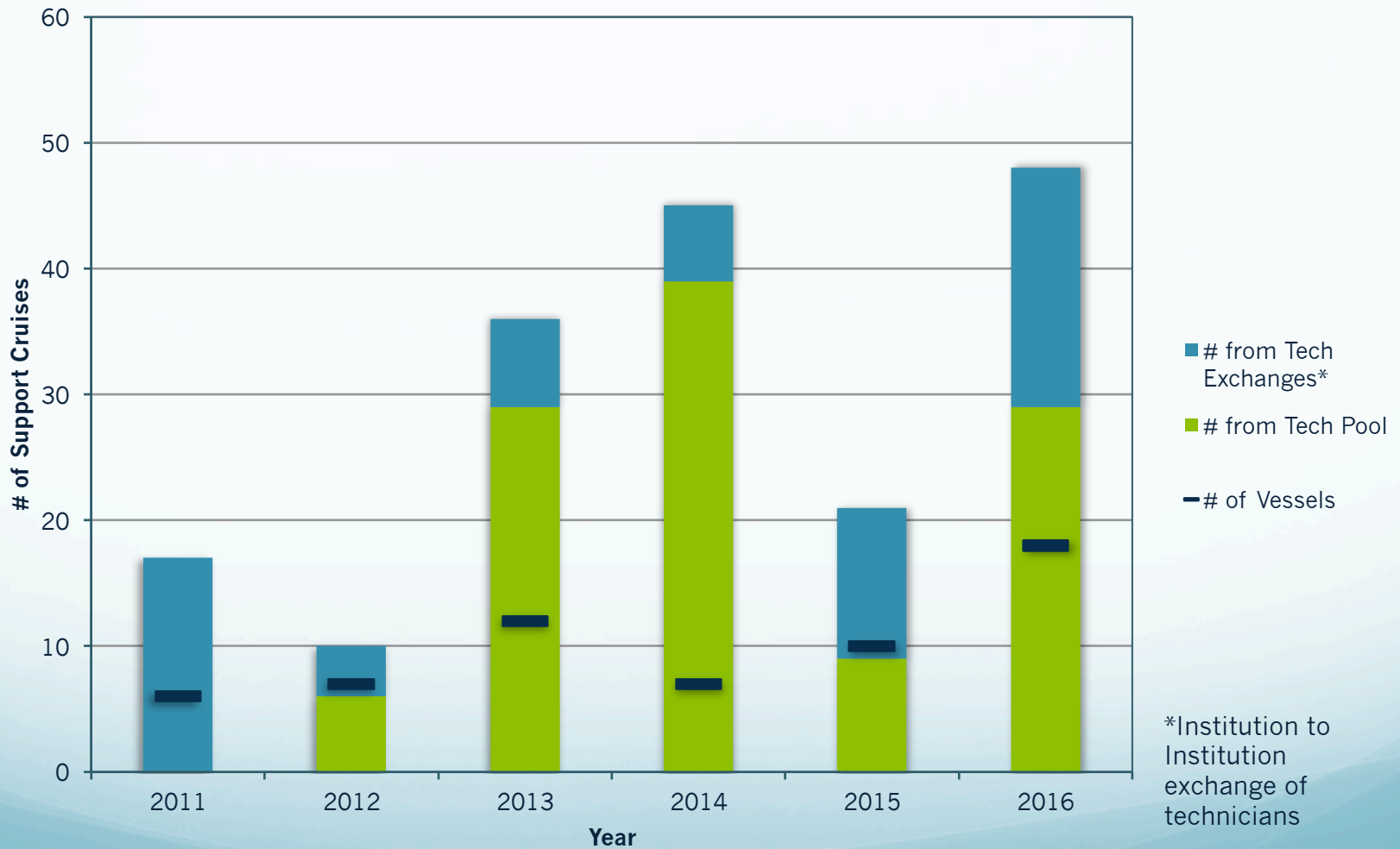
Current enrolment

- Started with 2 technicians in January 2016

- Now have 8 technicians in pool (1 mooring tech)

- Time at sea varies considerably:
  - 2 have had 6 deployments each in 2016
  - 5 will have had 1 by end of year
  - 1 has not deployed

Lessons learned

- Need for flexibility – ability to hire quickly

- Good communication is vital

- Centralized schedules and point of contact make things much easier

- Need knowledge of technicians' skills and needs of ship operators

- Interest has grown as people become more used to the system

Why TAMU?

- We are a member of UNOLS and ran the *Gyre* for many years

- Have a large technical group skilled in Physical Oceanography, chemistry and moorings (not including ODP) and have often supplied technicians for other institutions

- Have run the TABS mooring system in GoM for 20 years (currently 10 moorings)

- Now operating gliders and CODAR systems

2016 Cruises Supported by Tech Exchanges and Tech Pool
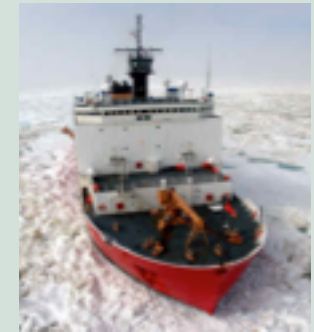
RVTEC
1-3Nov 2016
Alice Doyle / UNOLS Office
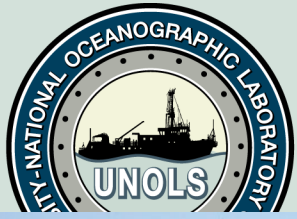
R/V Atlantic Explorer / BIOS

2016 was busy year!

R/V Marcus G. Langseth / LDEO

- 48 Cruises supported on 14 different vessels/ facilities
  - 19 Tech Exchanges
  - 29 Tech Pool

R/V Pelican / LUMCON

R/V Atlantis / WHOI

USCG Icebreaker Healy

RV Sikuliaq / UAF

R/V Neil Armstrong / WHOI

R/V Endeavor / URI

R/V Hugh R. Sharp / University of Delaware

R/V Roger Revelle / SIO

Other News

- Texas A&M Contract started in March 2016
  - 7 techs successfully and quickly hired into the pool

- Reaching out to other groups including OOI and the WHOI Mooring Group

Technician Feedback

Full-Time Technicians – *Tech exchange*

- Great break from the norm
- They enjoy the new challenges
- "I enjoyed seeing how another institution's operations run."
- "The experience increased my confidence in my skill-set."
- "I enjoyed seeing something new."

Technician Feedback

Contract Technicians – *Tech Pool*

- Enjoy contributing to the fleet
- Enjoy the flexibility
- Ability to stay involved without having to give up additional pursuits
- Technology transfer is rewarding