



Community Updates

COVID-19 & Fleet Scheduling Updates

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues its scourge, the fleet's COVID-19 protocols and procedures continue to serve as the guide for safe and successful science at sea. Although vaccination is arriving throughout the U.S., the fleet's medical advisory service, George Washington Maritime Medical Associates (GW-MMA), continues to advise that quarantine and testing procedures will likely continue to be necessary through most of 2021. As a case that recently developed on one of the Academic Research Fleet (ARF) vessels illustrates, continued vigilance in maintaining strict protocols - including thorough risk assessments and implementing effective risk mitigation - must continue for the foreseeable future. Ship operators skillfully and creatively continue to apply lessons learned to minimize the probability of bringing the virus onboard any of the ships. The impressive accomplishment of a great deal of science on the ships since the onset of the pandemic is a true tribute to the hard work by the ship operators and science parties. The UNOLS office, agencies, and operators will continue to stay in touch with the GW-MMA to keep abreast of the situation and to update guidance when it is appropriate.

Since the COVID-19 protocols must continue, the operators and agencies realized that the originally posted 2021 ship and vehicle schedules were too ambitious in some cases. Some of the 2021 schedules were demanding for a non-COVID year, let alone a year with the added COVID-19 protocols. The pace would not have been sustainable. Recently the schedulers worked closely with the operators, facility managers, agencies and the science teams to create more sustainable 2021 schedules that are now posted on the [STRS website](#).

NSF Releases R/V LANGSETH Regional Plan

After operating in the Pacific since late 2016, the R/V MARCUS G. LANGSETH will move to the Atlantic in early 2022 to support funded science. NSF will accept proposals to use R/V LANGSETH in the Atlantic and adjacent seas in the 2022-2024 timeframe. Per the general guidance for requesting ship time on Global-class ships, Principal Investigators should submit proposals at least 18 months prior to the requested start date of the cruise. For more information, see the UNOLS news article [here](#).

Marine Facility Planner SME to launch soon!

The U.S. ARF is moving from the legacy Ship-Time Request System (STRS) to a modern, fully integrated cruise scheduling and planning system, Marine Facilities Planning (MFP). The new Ship-time and Marine Equipment (SME) Request will replace the current STR. The new system will start collecting PI requests in the coming month.

For 2021, the community will use a hybrid of the two systems. Users submitting new requests (SMEs) will be redirected to the MFP. Historic and 2021 schedules will continue to reside in STRS system. Previously submitted STRs for 2022 and beyond will be transferred to MFP with the goal of scheduling for 2022 and beyond in MFP.

MFP has many features which will streamline the scheduling and cruise planning processes in the ARF. Once the scheduling process is live, subsequent phases will focus on additional modules including cruise planning and inventory management.

Committee News

New Committee Members

All of our committees are staffed by volunteers and we are grateful for their contributions of time and experience. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest committee members.

- Dr. Deborah Bronk/Bigelow - Council Chair Elect
- Dr. Maureen Conte/BIOS - Council Operator Rep

THANK YOU to Outgoing Committee Members

MANY THANKS to the following individuals' contributions to the UNOLS community.

- Dr. Kipp Shearman / OSU - Council
- Dr. Debbie Steinberg / VIMS - Council & MERAS
- Dr. Clare Reimers / OSU - MERAS

A new UNOLS Standing Committee - MERAS

The Maintaining an Environment of Respect Aboard Ships (MERAS) committee was originally a subcommittee of the UNOLS Council with members from the Council and other UNOLS organizations. Due to the continued importance of the issues this committee addresses, the UNOLS Representatives voted on the November 2020 UNOLS Ballot to convert this committee to a UNOLS Standing Committee. The committee's webpage is available [here](#). Be on the look out for a Call for Nominations for this important committee in the coming months.

2020 DeSSC Community Meeting

The DeSSC held their annual Community Meeting on Zoom on Friday 4 December with more than 115 participants! The meeting contained PI talks of the 2020 vehicle users, NDSF upgrades, ALVIN overhaul, agency reports and more. The meeting presentations, along with a recording of the meeting can be found on the UNOLS webpage [here](#).

The NDSF Chief Scientist, Adam Soule, is departing to take a position at URI. WHOI's Jeff Seewald will be the interim NDSF Chief Scientist. Good luck on your new adventure Adam and welcome Jeff!

2020 SCOAR December Monthly Meeting

SCOAR met for its second monthly meeting in December. The meeting featured air operation updates from NASA, the USCG, RSMAS and TAMU. The presentation files can be found [here](#). The next SCOAR meeting is slated for February 18, 2021

2020 MSROC Annual Meeting

MSROC's Annual meeting was 7 January. The meeting featured agency reports, exciting science reports from 2020 R/V LANGSETH users and discussions on the R/V LANGSETH regional plan and OBSIC renewal. Presentations from this meeting will be online soon [here](#).

Fleet Highlights

R/V NEIL ARMSTRONG



In this Newsletter we begin a new segment that focuses on a different Academic Research Fleet vessel each quarter. We highlight R/V NEIL ARMSTRONG in this edition.

Name: *R/V NEIL ARMSTRONG*
 Year Built: *2014*
 Place Built: *Dakota Creek Industries Shipyard, Anacortes, WA*
 Space Berthing: *24*
 Crew Berthing: *20*
 Owner: *Navy*
 Class of Vessel: *Ocean / Intermediate Class*

Since resuming seagoing oceanographic operations last summer the R/V ARMSTRONG diligently continued in conducting seven major science cruises starting early last June totaling up to 165 days of devoted science ship time. All of the cruises were to the North Atlantic to support NSF-funded OOI and OSNAP projects as well as two major ONR-funded science programs.

In order to successfully and safely execute these cruises, the WHOI ship operations, ship's crew, marine technicians, and logistics teams plus the science parties, have conducted extensive planning, deep-diving risk assessments, and implemented many creative risk mitigations. The WHOI team has set the "Gold Standard" for science cruise preparation, planning and risk mitigation in these days of COVID-19.



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Featured Photo

R/V SIKULIAQ fire crew after a drill. Left to right - Ryan Plunkett, Whitney Thomas, Jess Hettwer, and Dave Young. Photo credit: Kevin Reinhardt



Upcoming Events

AICC Winter Meeting
 4,5 February 2021
 11:30AM Eastern

SCOAR Monthly
 18 February 2021
 4:00PM Eastern

Please continue to check your email or the UNOLS website regarding the status of committee meetings.

Did you know...



2021 marks 50 years of UNOLS!

More information on the history of UNOLS can be found [here](#).



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