



UNIVERSITY-NATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHIC LABORATORY SYSTEM

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13 Jan 2011

Dear Sea-going Colleague:

Research in the polar regions requires specialized logistics and infrastructure that can operate safely and effectively in ice-covered waters. For the past 20 years, the Nathaniel B. Palmer (NBP) has provided the polar research community with an excellent platform for year-round operations in polar regions. The NBP has successfully hosted a variety of high profile research projects, and this research has resulted in a wealth of transformational, peer-reviewed, publications over her 20 years of service. However, high priority research questions with important ramifications for understanding global environmental change remain, such as the need to understand oceanographic processes that are increasingly tied to long-term stability of polar ice sheets. Addressing these questions requires enhanced access to ice-covered regions. To advance polar research in the future a vessel is needed that incorporates science mission capabilities articulated by the research community and increases the reach of U.S. researchers into a greater portion of ice-covered seas.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) recently tasked the UNOLS Office to establish a committee to review science mission requirements (SMR) identified during the Polar Research Vessel (PRV) Study completed in 2006. Through consultation with the research community, the committee will assess whether existing PRV SMRs meet current and emerging needs for polar research. The committee is also asked to identify any additional SMRs required to ensure that the PRV will meet the needs of the polar marine research community for the next 30 years. It is anticipated that a report from this activity will be transmitted to NSF in July 2011.

At this critical time, we need input from you about the capabilities required of a polar research vessel. Anyone in the ocean science community with an interest in the future of the research fleet and polar research ships is encouraged to complete the questionnaire at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/prv_survey_registration

A workshop is scheduled for February 28 and March 1st in Arlington, Virginia. The survey questionnaire at: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/prv_survey_registration has a section for registering for the workshop. Please submit this as soon as possible. Attendance may be limited, however whether you plan to attend or not, please respond with constructive comments and answers to the questionnaire on the Web page. Every effort will be made to ensure that those attending the workshop represent a broad range of scientific disciplines, geographic regions and institutions and that input from all interested sea going scientists is considered. Consideration of and an attempt to articulate regional differences between the Arctic and the Antarctic will be a part of these workshops. **Comments would be most helpful if received by 28 January 2011 and we would like to know of your interest in attending the workshop as soon as possible.** Please pass this announcement on to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

Jon Alberts, UNOLS Executive Secretary