

October 2006 Report to UNOLS RVTEC

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FY 2007 BUDGET

- NSF Appropriation for FY'07 has not been passed, and like most of the federal government, NSF is operating under a Continuing Resolution until after the November election.
- Modest increase for NSF is included in both House and Senate bills, but we'll just have to wait to see what gets passed and signed into law.

Division of Ocean Sciences Facilities budget planning

- As all know, FY'06 was a very difficult one for OCE facilities, with Ship Operations projections most of the year indicating major shortfalls due to rising fuel costs and severe budget constraints.
- This led to UNOLS involvement in developing procedures for planning future vessel layups and retirements, and a drop of nearly 1000 NSF operating days (~30%) from 2005 to 2006.
- The impact on technician and instrumentation funding from NSF was substantial.

Facilities budget planning, cont'd.

- The good news is that at year-end, NSF found that Ship Operation costs were not as high as feared, and we begin FY'07 somewhat ahead, with substantial carryforward funds to support ship costs, and modestly increased NSF ship time scheduled for 2007. Schedules remain weak, but worst scenarios have been avoided.
- It is my hope that we can use this positive development to address several critical issues in instrumentation and technical services. To this end, I am encouraging planning for group purchases in several areas.

Facilities budget planning, cont'd.

- NSF continues to encourage operators to give high priority to training and communication, and to support technician transfers between operators to educate each other and learn new ways to improve quality of service.

Major (MREFC) Initiatives and Future Plans

- Alaska Region Research Vessel (ARRV)
 - Expect MREFC funding beginning FY'07
- Scientific Ocean Drilling Vessel (SODV)
 - MREFC funding began FY'06
- Ocean Observatory Initiative (OOI)
 - Expect MREFC funding beginning FY'07

Mid-Size (OCE) Initiatives

- Regional Class Research Vessels (RCRV)
 - Mid-size (OCE) funding, design study ongoing, expect operator selection FY'07.
- R/V Marcus Langseth Conversion
 - Mid-size (OCE) funding, new LDEO research vessel for 3-D seismic and emphasis on marine geophysical research undergoing conversion.
- New HOV to replace DSV Alvin
 - Mid-size (OCE) funding, new human-occupied vehicle (submersible) being designed by WHOI.

Key OCE Personnel Changes

- New OCE Division Director, Julie Morris, in early 2006. Acting DD Larry Clark has returned to his position as Head of Ocean Section.
- Michael Reeve, Head of Integrative Programs Section (IPS) including ship operations, retires October 31. Position announcement expected shortly.