

UNOLS COUNCIL MEETING
8:30 A.M., Thursday, 11 October 2007
National Science Foundation, Room 1235
4201 Wilson Boulevard Arlington, VA

Executive Summary

The UNOLS Council met at the National Science Foundation (NSF) in Arlington, VA on the morning of October 11, 2007. Major discussion topics included:

- 2008 ship operations
- Data management best practices
- Crew and marine technician retention and hiring issues
- Code of conduct for marine scientific research vessels
- Harassment at sea
- 2007/2008 UNOLS goals and priorities
- Frequency spectrum management
- R/V *M.G. Langseth* UNOLS vessel designation

Stan Winslow was appointed as the new Ship Scheduling Chair and Elizabeth Caporelli as the Ship Scheduling Vice-Chair (Chair Elect).

Action Items

New Action Items:

- ⇒ **2008 Fleet Operations: Fleet Operations and UNOLS Recommendations**
 - Send a letter all operators asking that they put forward their most efficient schedules and day rates. Any stand-downs costs should be calculated. (Mike Prince)
 - Agencies will make recommendations using the updated cost information and ship schedules will be posted in late October.
- ⇒ **UNOLS Council Elections:** Hold run-off election (Office)
- ⇒ **Harassment at Sea:**
 - Work to raise awareness (All)
 - Check with Human Resources Offices at respective institutions to determine the cost of California on-line tests (McNutt/Prince)
- ⇒ **R/V *M.G. Langseth* UNOLS Vessel Designation** – When LDEO fulfills contingencies and notifies UNOLS, finalize the UNOLS vessel designation. (LDEO/Council)
- ⇒ **Winter FIC/Council Meeting:** The winter Council meeting is tentatively planned for Feb 7-8 at USF (St. Petersburg, FL). Confirm dates and host. (Office)
- ⇒ **Frequency Spectrum Management** – The NSF director is required to provide a report to Dept of Commerce by late November on NSF's use of the radio frequency.
 - Distribute survey drafted by RVTEC to all UNOLS members. (Office)
 - Compile the results and provide a response for NSF. (Richard Perry, RVTEC RF Subcommittee Chair)
- ⇒ **Request for Proposals to Host the UNOLS Office** (Office/Marcia)

- Announce solicitation for UNOLS Office Host in late 2007/early 2008 and ask for letters of intent, to be followed by request for proposals. (McNutt/Office)
 - Review the proposals and provide a recommendation. (UNOLS)
- ⇒ **UNOLS Dues Accounting** – Consider raising dues. (Office/Council)
- ⇒ **Ad hoc Committee on Data Management Best Practices** – Carry out charge in accordance with the approved terms of reference. (Ad-hoc committee)
- ⇒ **Global Class Science Mission Requirements** – Update the Global SMR using the new format (Regional/Ocean Class template) and consider the community input that was received. (Prince)
- ⇒ **Code of Conduct for Marine Scientific Research Vessels** – If adopted by ISOM, UNOLS can consider adoption. (Council)
- ⇒ **Web Resource for announcing Science Opportunities on UNOLS Vessels:**
- Send an Email to next year’s PIs about the volunteer/watchstander page (Office)
 - Add a button on STR to identify space available for volunteers. (Office)
- ⇒ **UNOLS objectives, priorities and goals** – Develop strategies for implementing them. (Council)

Continuing Actions:

- ⇒ **Crew and Marine Technician Retention and Hiring Issues** – Present proposed solutions to the Council (Hawkins & Martin)
- ⇒ **RVOC Safety Standards** – Finalize and send RVSS to the Council for adoption. (RVOC Safety Committee)
- ⇒ **Model of a Future Fleet Schedule** - Continue work on the model of a future fleet schedule. Additional work will include: Seismic work, OOI projections, and operating costs. (Prince)
- ⇒ **Continue Review of PCAR** - Provide materials to the PCAR committee and resume the review process. (Prince)
- ⇒ **SCOAR Chair** – Solicit nominations for a new SCOAR Chair (Office)

Appendices

I	Meeting Agenda
II	Participant List
III	Ship Scheduling Report
IV	Ad-hoc Committee on Data Management Best Practices - Terms of Reference and Update Report
V	Crew and Marine Technician Retention Report
VI	Draft - Code of Conduct for Marine Science Research Vessels
VII	Draft - 2007/2008 UNOLS Goals and Priorities
VIII	RVTEC - Frequency Spectrum Management Survey Results
IX	UNOLS Committee Reports

Call the Meeting: The UNOLS Council met at the National Science Foundation (NSF) in Arlington, VA on the morning of October 11, 2007. Marcia McNutt, UNOLS Chair, called the meeting to order and provided an opportunity for introductions. The agenda is included as *Appendix I* and the list of participants is posted as *Appendix II*.

Accept the minutes of the July 2007 Council Meeting – A motion was made and passed to approve the minutes of the July 2007 phone/web Council Meeting <<http://www.unols.org/meetings/2007/200707cnc/200707cncmi.html>> (Ortner/Wiebe).

Subcommittee Report on Recommendations on 2008 Ship Operations – Marcia McNutt explained that a UNOLS ad-hoc committee of Mary Jane Perry (Chair), Vernon Asper, and Marcia McNutt is in place to provide recommendations on the 2008 ship operations. They are unconflicted because they are not from UNOLS operator institutions. This year's scheduling process has been very challenging and the federal agencies asked that the subcommittee wait until more is known about budgets and ship requests before taking action.

Mike Prince presented slides that illustrated the magnitude of the budget deficits for Fleet Operations in 2008. The slides are included as *Appendix III*. The total number of ship days for 2008 is based on the ship operators' Letters of Intent (LOIs). The costs that were used in Mike's projections are based on operator feedback or in some cases 20% over last year's operation rate. The net result is that each agency has a significant budget deficit if they were to support the scheduled programs from their 2008 budgets. The deficit levels are: NSF = ~ 7.3M, Navy = ~\$2.4M, and NOAA = ~\$1.1M.

The deficit can be largely credited to higher operating costs, *Langseth* coming into service in 2008, and stagnant Federal budgets. Liz Brenner explained that the operation costs are based on preliminary ship day rates. SIO has not evaluated any cost savings that might result from long stand-down periods.

Mike said that there are three possible solutions to the deficit problem:

- 1) Agencies find more money – This is unlikely. The Navy plus-up received in previous years is not expected in FY08.
- 2) Revisit the ship day rates to determine any cost savings.
- 3) Eliminate and consolidate cruises. All of the large ships have been asked to schedule long stand-downs.

Discussion followed:

- Peter Ortner – Why have ship costs gone up by 15%? Mike – This is something that they need to look into. Fuel costs have not gone up by 15%, so we are not sure why there is an increase. The ship operators haven't done their final proposal calculations yet.
- Linda Goad – Most of the pending ship days are on small or Regional ships and won't impact the budget very much.
- Dan Schwartz – Ships and crew will all require Transportation Worker Identification Credentials (TWIC) in 2008. This comes with a cost of \$235/person.
- Peter Ortner – It is difficult to understand the extent of the problem without the knowing final day rates.
- Linda Goad – The operators and directors should be asked to revisit their day rates and sharpen their figures.

- Carin Ashjian – Are the personnel costs and benefits a major factor in the cost increase? We should try to figure out where the increases are coming from.
- Dolly Dieter – Has any one ever looked at how the agency budgets are changing as compared to the operating costs? Mike Prince – The Navy’s fleet support has been level at \$10M for years, NOAA’s support has gone down, and NSF’s base budget for fleet ship operations support has gone down in recent years.
- The timeline for reaching decisions about 2008 budgets need to be made soon. Bob Houtman explained that if he doesn’t spend his FY08 budget early in the FY, he risks losing it.
- Linda Goad –NSF will probably ask the operators to hold their costs to 2007 levels (or lower).
- Vernon Asper suggested applying the airline model to ship scheduling. Offer cheaper fares as the cruise gets closer. Dolly and Linda explained that this is not possible with the Federal fleet. All users are required to pay the same amount.
- Matt Hawkins – At the University of Delaware they are exploring an operational model where the state of New Jersey will sublet *Hugh R. Sharp* ship time.
- Linda – By the end of October, Mike Prince, Bob Houtman, and Linda Goad will examine the ship schedules for optimization and make decisions about operations.
- Linda suggested that the Council draft a letter to UNOLS operators and Directors. The letter should explain the magnitude of the problem, request updated numbers, and explain the consequences if the deficit cannot be reduced. There will have to be stand-downs for all Global ships and the costs for stand-downs need to be calculated.
- Dan Schwartz suggested that the agencies just tell each operator that they will receive support at the 2007 day rate level plus 2%. Mike Prince – Basically, this is what the agencies are doing. When the 2007 day rates are used to calculate the 2008 Fleet operations, the deficit for NSF is minimal.
- Al Suchy expressed concern (and frustration) over the costs incurred by the science parties that impact ship operations. Science parties will change ports or make other cruise changes that result in big costs for the operator. He suggested that the UNOLS letter regarding the budget deficit should be sent to all, including the science parties.

A motion was made and passed to draft a letter from the Council to the UNOLS operators and Directors asking that the operators collectively work to reduce costs on a fleet wide scale (Wiebe/Ortner). The operators need to collectively solve this problem of minimizing operating costs across UNOLS the Fleet to meet the available budget. Cost savings resulting from stand down periods should be evaluated. Mike Prince would distribute the letter.

Ad-hoc Committee on Data Management Best Practices – An ad-hoc committee was established in July 2007 to report to the UNOLS Council on current community-wide practices in data and metadata capture when collecting data at sea, and to identify best practices and make recommendations for improvements. The committee Co-Chairs, Stephen Miller and Robert Arko, provided the Council with a written status report on their activities and plans. The report is included as *Appendix IV*. The report includes their proposed terms of reference.

Marcia said that the ad-hoc committee has been very active and they have expanded their task such that they may need more time, but they have been very enthusiastic. The Committee has stated that the highest priority is “shipboard metadata creation.” They have discussed the idea that the UNOLS

ship scheduling system could facilitate metadata creation for cruises. Common port and cruise identifiers could be defined.

Marcia suggested that the ad-hoc be encouraged to take on their tasks. The Council agreed. Marcia will send encouraging words to the committee.

Crew and Marine Technician Retention and Hiring Issues – Matt Hawkins reported on the issues of crew and marine technician retention and hiring. His slides are included as *Appendix V*.

Matt Hawkins, Bill Martin, Stewart Lamerdin, and Pete Zerr sent a letter to the Council in July 2007 regarding this issue. In this past year there have been 38 “near misses.” Near misses are defined as not having adequate crew to sail within 24 hours of sailing time. Retention and hiring are complex issues that are impacting industry, agencies, institutions, and the individual. Funding is limited and we must work within the current budget constraints. Industry can offer higher salaries and as a result, choice candidates are not as interested in working for UNOLS. This is a multi-dimensional problem that requires a multi-dimensional solution.

To understand the extent of the retention/hiring problems, Matt and the others are gathering information and hard data. They will work to develop tangible and realistic solutions. They hope that the data will illustrate the severity of problem and can be used as justification for changes in short-term spending priorities and policies. Also, they hope it can be used as justification for long-term funding increases and new procedures.

Matt, Bill, Pete, and Stewart have already begun collecting data. They have surveyed the operators to define the problems and identify the “near misses.” Soon, a comprehensive salary survey of all ship classes, crew and techs, and current industry figures will be released to operators and coordinated through UNOLS Office. They are also studying what industry and other agencies are doing in response to this problem.

Possible solutions include:

- Budget priorities – investing in people vs. investing in equipment?
- More formalized sharing/management of relief personnel?
- Promotion of UNOLS fleet?
- UNOLS “hawse pipe”?
- Reduce other operating costs – regulatory relief?

Matt, Bill, Pete, and Stewart are working to have a “White Paper” in early 2008.

Discussion followed:

- Dennis Nixon reported that he operates two small ships and his best employees/seamen are ex-fishermen. They are interested in steady work. This group could be targeted. Also, students with science or engineering backgrounds that show interest in vessel operations could be recruited and trained.
- Dan Schwartz stated this issue is a crisis. The problems are still transparent to the science users because the cruises haven’t been impacted yet. He predicts that a science cruise will have to be cancelled this year, due to crew shortage. One problem is that young people are not going into the marine business. Entry level people are not applying for crew positions because they cannot afford the required training. In industry, the training and education costs are typically covered by the employer.

- Deb Kelley stated that there seems to be a mismatch. Earlier in the meeting, we heard about ship stand-downs. Can't some of the people layed-off during the stand-downs be placed on the other ships that are looking for personnel? Mike – Some crew and techs are discouraged by the stand-downs and are leaving. Also, many times the downtimes occur during the slow periods for all ships. Matt – A possible recommendation is to make better use of the individuals affected by stand-down periods.
- Sandy said that solving the short-term problem for technicians by sharing among institutions has created a long-term problem because institutions have stopped hiring new techs. The UNOLS technician pool is too small and there are no newly trained people.
- Marcia – Escalating day-rates and crew retention are closely connected issues. Fixing one will help the other. Unfortunately, a lot of this is not within UNOLS' power to control.
- Bill Martin commented that discussion on the retention/hiring problem always centers on the crew because a shortage of crew results in the ship not sailing. This is also a serious problem for the technical support groups and this is often overlooked. The ships are often sailing short handed with technicians.

10:15 Break

Code of Conduct for Marine Scientific Research Vessels – At the request of the delegates present at the 2006 International Ship Operators Meeting, Dennis Nixon helped develop a document with colleagues from the UK and Ireland on the Code of Conduct for Marine Science Research Vessels. ISOM would like to demonstrate that research vessel operators are voluntarily taken actions that would mitigate impacts of ocean science research. ISOM wants a Code that would be simple and workable for operators.

Dennis and colleagues used a variety of existing guidelines (InterRidge, International Seabed Authority, FAO Code, Great Barrier Reef, UNCLOS treaty, etc) as a starting point. The draft Code provides a two-page statement. The document addresses ship operations and the physical, acoustic, and chemical impacts associated with science operations.

The draft Code was circulated to the Council prior to the meeting and is available as **Appendix VI**. The document will be discussed at the ISOM meeting in two weeks. The Code would be voluntary.

Discussion followed:

- Peter Wiebe – What is the procedure for adoption. Dennis –If the Code is adopted by ISOM, then UNOLS can decide whether or not to adopt it as a policy.
- Sandy Shor noted that there will be no U.S. government representative at this year's ISOM meeting. He further noted that adopting any international standard regarding noise in the ocean is a very dangerous thing to do. Dennis said that this code does not impose any specific standards and for the most part states that we recognize certain environmental problems. It imposes no obligations. The Code is designed to provide a statement of purpose.
- Peter Ortner expressed concern over the “tracers” wording. He suggested replacing the text:

“The use of chemical tracers should be discouraged, as well as the use of expendable devices which contain hazardous materials. Where there is no alternative to these techniques, every effort should be taken to minimize their use.”

with

“The use of chemical tracers and expendable devices should be considered only when there is no viable alternative to accomplish the scientific objectives. When they are used, every effort should be made to minimize their impact.”

Dennis said that he would bring the concern over the tracers to the attention of ISOM.

- Dolly emphasized that Dennis cannot represent NSF at ISOM.
- Marcia warned that the Code could impact NOAA in terms of the Argo array program.

Harassment at Sea – There have been recent incidents of sexual harassment at sea. Marcia McNutt summarized some of the anecdotal evidence that comes from harassment reports given in confidence. These problems are often between members of the science party. In some cases it may be an extension of activities ashore. Often the incidents are never officially reported for fear that they might jeopardize career advancement. Official action cannot be taken without a formal complaint or awareness by responsible personnel.

Discussion:

- Marcia asked how many people were from institutions that carried out annual sexual harassment training. A show of hands indicated that training is limited to California (where it is mandated). Marcia said that in California, employees are required to take an on-line course (~2 hours) followed by a test.
- Peter Ortner commented that the harassment problem seems to have morphed from crew to scientist / to scientist to scientist. Has the first problem been successfully addressed? Marcia – It is still a problem to both, but there seems to be less hesitancy to report crew cases.
- Peter Ortner – Is this a UNOLS problem, or is it institutional? Marcia – It seems to be an inter-institutional problem.
- Bob Detrick –WHOI has tried to address this issue by providing avenues for reporting harassment incidents and maintaining anonymity. Carin Ashjian commented that when there are so few women aboard cruises it isn't hard to figure out who filed a complaint.
- Marcia – It is important to address the cause of the problem.
- Mike stated that the updated Research Vessel Safety Standards includes a template for a sexual harassment brochure. The template was modeled after WHOI's brochure.
- Jim Bauer asked if the harassment policy is posted on the ships. Reply – It is posted on some of the ships.
- Marcia – Often the offender isn't aware that he/she created a violation. Education is needed.
- Marcia stated that she would like UNOLS to be proactive in stopping the harassment problem at the source by finding a way to make sure people are trained. Perhaps chief scientists should be surveyed to determine if he/she ever witnessed sexual harassment incidents aboard a UNOLS vessel, and if so did they act upon it?
- Marcia stated that she has added the need to address sexual harassment it to the UNOLS goals and priorities for 2008. UNOLS should work to raise awareness.

As an action item, Marcia and Mike will determine the cost of the California on-line sexual harassment test costs.

2007/2008 UNOLS Goals and Priorities – Marcia McNutt reviewed the draft UNOLS vision and mission statements and the 2007/2008 UNOLS Goals and Priorities. Her slides are included as *Appendix VII*.

Marcia recommended the addition of the words “efficiently run” to the vision statement. It is important that the Fleet be efficiently run given the current budget scenarios. The mission statement was unchanged.

Goals for 2008 include three items:

1. Enlarge the group of supporters for UNOLS both in terms of capitalization and operations.
2. Extend our planning horizon to ensure that we are building a UNOLS that really meets what the infrastructure needs will be for ocean sciences in the coming decades.
3. Continuously work to lower barriers to effective use of UNOLS ships caused by disabilities, gender, or other special situations.

Operating the UNOLS Fleet is facing serious problems. Fewer agencies are supporting fleet operations at their historical levels. It is difficult to keep a talented group of technical support personnel at sea with the increased needs for high levels of training. Overall costs for operating the Fleet are at the highest levels. We need to consider use of the fleet in different, more efficient ways. Fuel efficiency for the ships of the future must be considered.

In terms of equal access to UNOLS vessels, progress is being made in the area of ADA access. However, evidence suggests that increased awareness on what actions constitute sexual harassment and the negative consequences of such behavior on UNOLS vessels is needed.

The Council endorsed the 2007/2008 goals and the revision to the vision statement as presented.

Radio Frequency (RF) Spectrum Management – At the July Council meeting, the RVTEC was tasked with preparing a written status report of the Fleet’s RF spectrum use. Richard Perry, Chair of the RVTEC RF Spectrum Subcommittee, provided Peter Wiebe with the report in August. The report is included as *Appendix VIII*. In turn, Peter forwarded the status report to Dr Otis Brown and asked his advice on the steps that should be taken next. Dr. Brown replied that he no longer serves on the National Academy of Science (NAS) subcommittee that deals with frequency spectrum. Dr. Brown forwarded the report to the staff of the NAS (no feedback yet). Peter suggested that the survey be expanded beyond RVTEC to the science users.

Mike Prince said that the NSF Director is required to provide a report to the Department of Commerce by late November on NSF’s use of the radio frequency spectrum. NSF’s Astronomical Sciences Division will compile the spectrum data and provide it to the Director. Tom Gergely is the point of contact at NSF.

As an action item, the UNOLS Office will send the RF survey to all UNOLS members (and indicate that responses received by early November would be most useful). Additionally, key science users of the RF spectrum will be targeted. The data received will be compiled and sent to Tom Gergely at NSF.

R/V M.G. Langseth UNOLS Vessel Designation – Earlier in the year, UNOLS sent a letter of approval for UNOLS vessel designation to LDEO. The approval was contingent on the successful completions of reflagging, conversion and NSF inspection. John Diebold reported that the

contingencies should be fulfilled by the second week of November 2007. John said that once the contingencies are met, LDEO will need a quick turnaround from UNOLS on approval of the vessel designation. The designation is needed before the ship get underway to conduct NSF funded sea trials scheduled for 17 November.

UNOLS Council Winter Meeting – The Council agreed that their winter meeting should be joint with FIC. Dave Hebert, FIC Chair, said that he will be at sea from 18 February to 19 April. Dates for the winter Council meeting were tentatively planned for 7-8 February 2008. The UNOLS Office will confirm the dates and location.

Committee Activities and Issues requiring Council Attention - Committee Chairs provided written reports prior to the Council meeting. The reports are included as *Appendix IX*. Issues requiring Council attention were addressed:

- The Ship Scheduling Committee has nominated Stan Winslow as Chair and Liz Caporelli as Chair Elect. Each position is for a 3-year term. A motion was made and passed to approve the nominations (McNutt/Ashjian).
- Scientific Committee for Oceanographic Atmospheric Research (SCOAR) – Mike prince reported that ONR has indicated that they would like the SCOAR to continue to meet. The committee should renew their focus on the CIRPAS facility and access to it. The Council agreed that the SCOAR Committee should regroup. Mike will solicit nominations for a new chair.

The meeting adjourned at noon.