

UNOLS COUNCIL – Phone/Web Conference
Wednesday and Thursday, July 1 & 2, 2009, 1:00 pm – 4:00 PM EDT (each day)

Executive Summary: The summer meeting of the UNOLS Council was held via phone conference. Updates were provided on UNOLS activities and Fleet Renewal Plans. Progress on 2008/2009 UNOLS goals was discussed. A report was provided on 2009 Fleet schedules, estimated operation costs, and 2010 ship scheduling. The Council discussed the R/V *Seward Johnson* and its designation as a UNOLS Vessel. The Nominating Committee provided a draft 2009/2010 UNOLS Council slate which was endorsed by the Council.

Appendices:

- I [Agenda](#)
- II [Participants](#)
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Action Items:

Schmidt Research Vessel Institute Foundation and Marine Science and Technology Foundation – The Council requested that they be kept informed about the activities and future plans of these Foundations and their facilities (2 ships and HOV).

Ocean Class Acquisition – The UNOLS Office will inform the UNOLS Community about the Ocean Class Operator RFP and potential operator's conference at the end of July (the UNOLS Office will request details from the Navy that can be sent to the membership).

R/V *Seward Johnson* – The UNOLS Office will prepare an information package for the Council that will include documentation on the requirements for being a UNOLS vessel, the definition of an oceanographic research vessel from CFR subchapter U, and a copy of the Cooperative Agreement. HBOI's compliance with the RVSS and HOV Safety Standards will be considered.

HBOI will be informed that the Council is reviewing HBOI's qualifications as an operator and their UNOLS vessel designation of R/V *Seward Johnson*. HBOI will have an opportunity to respond.

The information package will be provided to the Council prior to the October meeting. The October Council meeting agenda will include a vote on whether or not to remove R/V *Seward Johnson* from the Fleet.

Scheduling Private Work on UNOLS Vessels and Cruise Cancellation Policies – Add this item to the RVOC 2010 Annual Meeting agenda.

Post Cruise Assessment Report Subcommittee – Schedule a summer phone meeting to review membership and future tasks.

Gender Climate at Sea – Kenneth Coale will work with Mike Prince to explore on-line training options with Workplace Answers.

Goals 2009-2010:

Continue to work through a smooth transition from MLML /UNOLS Office. Work to identify areas where we can improve processes.

Explore how to work closer with OPP, to coordinate schedules and operations of Antarctic Research vessels.

The Council was requested to provide any additional goals to the UNOLS Office.

SCOAR – A meeting will be scheduled at CIRPAS. A town hall meeting at Ocean Sciences in 2010 will be explored.

Meeting Minutes:

Day 1 – Wednesday, July 1, 2009

Call the Meeting: Vernon Asper, UNOLS Chair, called the meeting to order and provided an opportunity for introductions. The meeting agenda is included as *Appendix I* and the participant list is included as *Appendix II*.

The Status of UNOLS On-Going Activities and Issues: Brief summaries of the following items were provided. They are included as *Appendix III*.

Academic Fleet Renewal Activities and Plans - Annette DeSilva summarized the renewal activities currently underway:

Regional Class Acquisition (NSF) - Two ship designs are complete. NSF has suspended the detailed design and construction phase until funding is available. The construction cost estimates are higher than originally planned (\$50-60M per ship). NSF remains committed to the RCRV but will likely build fewer ships.

Ocean Class Acquisition – On April 24, 2009 the Navy issued a “Request for Proposal for procurement of the Ocean Class AGOR.” The quotes were due on Wednesday, June 24, 2009. Two ships are planned; the first ship in FY14, second quarter and the second ship in FY14, quarter 4. The budget for each ship is \$92.5M. There are two phases for the project: Phase I is Contract/Preliminary Design and Phase II is for Detail Design and Construction.

The Navy solicitation for Ocean Class Operator Selection has been briefed to CNR and approved. The solicitation should be released in mid July 2009.

Ocean Class Science Mission Requirements - Mike Prince created a draft re-organization of the Ocean Class SMRs that includes a table with threshold and desirable values for parameters as well as priority levels. There was opportunity for broad community input. The Fleet Improvement Committee (FIC) held a phone meeting on April 8, 2009 to review the community input to the Ocean Class SMR table of values and priorities. Mike Prince is finalizing the SMR table.

Alaska Region Research Vessel (ARRV) – NSF awarded their first ARRA funded major project to the ARRV in May. University of Alaska is moving forward with design/construction plans for the ARRV.

Other Facility Acquisition Efforts - Marcia McNutt reported that Eric Schmidt of Google Earth has set up two Foundations, the Schmidt Research Vessel Institute Foundation and the Marine Science and Technology Foundation (MSTF). The Foundations have acquired two vessels. One of the vessels is ice capable and the other ship is a 90m fisheries ship that has a high speed capability. Marcia has encouraged the Foundation to operate the vessels in accordance with UNOLS standards and practices. The two ships are being refit near Hamburg, Germany. They will be home-ported near Alameda, CA. MBARI is assisting the foundation by giving them advice on operations.

Discussion:

- Jon Alberts – Should UNOLS start talking to the Foundation? Marcia – MBARI has advised them to hire a marine superintendent. Until that time, there is no one that is familiar with research vessel operations to talk to. The MSTF is interested in data pipelines and is very excited about the metadata initiative. They would like to get involved with the R2R project.
- Jon – UNOLS can assist with job postings.
- Kenneth Coale – In review of the Fleet Improvement Plan, there is more ship day capacity than funded ship days. There is capacity in the UNOLS Fleet to support the Foundation’s research activities. Will the Foundations be able to use UNOLS vessels instead of using their own? Marcia – MSTF is building a full ocean depth Human Occupied Vehicle (HOV). This would be a fly-away system. It has a novel design and is torpedo shaped. During the first phase, the HOV will have a 6,000m capacity. The icebreaker was donated to the Foundation.
- Linda Goad – How old are the ships? Will the Foundations fund the research? Marcia – The fisheries vessel was built in 2007. The Icebreaker was built in the 1970s and rebuilt.
- Kenneth – He is concerned about additional ships, but it is an exciting area. Marcia – their intent is to do no harm. She just wants to make sure that the Council was informed about these plans.

- Bruce Corliss – Is there any chance that this Foundation would fund other research? Marcia – The Foundation advisory group has met only once. She doesn't know what science that they will be doing. They don't have a strategic plan.
- Vernon – It would be good for us to have an official correspondence with this group. We would like to be involved in their early plans. Marcia – The Foundation was concerned about being involved with UNOLS because it would constrain their flexibility in scheduling their vessels.
- Annette – The Office will send the UNOLS membership guidelines to Marcia.
- Rob Pinkel – UNOLS should work with the Foundation so that they are not discouraged from supporting academic research.
- Annette – Where do we get information about the plans and Foundation? Marcia – The HOV is being developed by DOER.
- Bob Collier – UNOLS should stay informed about the Foundations activities.

National Research Council Study: Annette provided an update on the NRC study on the “Evolution of the National Oceanographic Research Fleet.” The study is funded by the Office of Naval Research. The description and membership can be found at <http://www8.nationalacademies.org/cp/projectview.aspx?key=49014>. The OSB Committee held their first meeting on January 29th. Vernon Asper, Mike Prince, and Dave Hebert provided a presentation. Since January, the OSB has requested additional data from the UNOLS Office.

Nancy Rabalais added that she is on the NRC committee and they had a meeting in June. The report has been drafted and they hope to finalize it soon.

Rolling deck to Repository (R2R) Project – Jon Alberts provided a status report of the R2R efforts. R2R is a collaborative 1-year pilot project funded by NSF OCE. Their goal is to prototype an end-to-end system to deliver data and documentation from research vessels to a central shoreside repository. The R2R Team includes LDEO, SIO, and WHOI. They have inventoried 500 cruises from 10 vessels so far. Data catalogs and track maps are posted at rvdata.us. R2R has established a data delivery pipeline from R2R to NGDC. R2R submitted a proposal for a 5 year R2R project to NSF-OCE OITS on 26 June 2009. The full list of R2R plans is included in the Appendix III.

Annette asked the Council if the ad hoc UNOLS committee that had been formed to determine best practices in data management was still needed. R2R is addressing these same issues and includes many of the original ad hoc committee members. Council – The ad hoc committee is no longer needed.

Consortium for Ocean Leadership - Jon Alberts attended the Consortium for Ocean Leadership's Meeting on May 28 & 29. The annual dues of \$13,500 for membership in Ocean Leadership has been an issue for many institutions. There is focus on defining the benefits of being a member. Bob Gagosian is taking a careful look into this issue. The meeting included reports on agency priorities. Ocean Leadership discussed the issue of large programs versus small programs. There is concern that the large programs are taking funds away from the small programs.

Ocean Leadership has hired Mel Brisco. Tim Cowles has been hired as the Director of the Ocean Observatory Initiative (OOI) office. They are also advertising for a senior science person for IODP.

The OOI issue of instrumentation property ownership was discussed during the meeting. OOI will become owner of equipment.

Ocean Leadership's next meeting is on October 15-16 in Washington, DC.

Interagency Working Group on Facilities (IWG-F) Future Initiative – Annette reported that IWG-F members are re-focusing on a broader spectrum of infrastructure issues: ships, autonomous vehicles, specialized platforms, and Arctic operations. They are also returning to a Charter goal of improving agency coordination on infrastructure topics of mutual interest. Bi-monthly meetings are planned with a focused topic agenda, beginning with ships. UNOLS was invited to present the Fleet Improvement Plan and gave a report on 19 May 2009.

Establishing Facility Renewal and Upgrade Priorities - The UNOLS Guidelines for Committee recommendations to agencies does not include a process for setting priorities regarding the committee recommendations. It had been suggested that facility renewal/upgrades be organized into categories of near term, intermediate term, and long term priority OR high, medium, low priority.

Discussion:

Vernon – Setting priorities is a challenge. This issue has existed for a long time. In the past committees would often make recommendation directly to the Agencies. Now a process is formalized so that major recommendations (>\$1M) would have to first be endorsed by the Council.

Marcia – It is in the UNOLS Charter that the Council should review recommendations. We haven't always been consistent with this. Also, recommendations from different Committees are seldom submitted at the same time so setting priorities is more challenging. When a committee makes a recommendation, the Council reviews it and then provides a cover letter to the committee recommendation.

The Council decided that a committee was not needed at this time to establish facility priorities.

2009 UNOLS Goals and Issues: One of this year's UNOLS goals was to investigate ways that the UNOLS Fleet could be more flexible. Our science is being supported by a more diverse array of stakeholders, paradoxically at the same time that support for UNOLS is getting less broad in its base. We need to better understand this divergence (cost problems, insurance issues, mission mismatches, different decision timescales, etc.) and do what we can to increase operational flexibility to accommodate additional

opportunities. It has been suggested that an ad hoc subcommittee be formed to investigate problem and make recommendations. Vernon offered to take this on.

R/V *Seward Johnson*: Discussion on status and designation as a UNOLS Vessel - Jon Alberts reviewed the recent history on HBOI's plans and scheduling of R/V *Seward Johnson*. In late May 2009, Jon received a call from a commercial ship operator, Chance, complaining that UNOLS was competing on commercial work. Linda Goad and Jon called HBOI about this issue on 16 June. Pete Petro (HBOI) and Bill Baxley (NBOI) said that they were indeed competing on the work and were considering withdrawal from the UNOLS Fleet. They indicated that they have been losing money for many years on the ship operations. UNOLS scheduling is not working for them. Recently, they have not been active participants in the scheduling process.

Discussion:

- Linda – Some of the work that *Seward Johnson* did for the Waite Foundation might jeopardize their R/V designation.
- Marcia – What type of Waite work? Linda – HBOI was using AUV to look for Amelia Earhart's plane.
- Linda - HBOI has accelerated the schedule for their NSF inspection. NSF has also requested to see HBOI's certification for the HOV. NSF has sent messages to HBOI, but has not received anything back.
- Jon reported that he spoke with Bill Baxley (HBOI) and he is currently not planning to attend the scheduling meeting.
- Bruce – If *Seward Johnson* leaves the UNOLS Fleet, we would lose the capabilities of the shallow water HOV. However, from an east coast fleet capacity perspective, the impact is not negative.
- Vernon – What kind of guidance can be given to UNOLS operators that are considering non-traditional work?
- Linda Goad – HBOI has posted an LOI, but that is the only correspondence that has been received. If Linda doesn't hear anything else, she may schedule the NSF work that is on *Seward Johnson* on other vessels.
- Nancy Rabalais made a motion to remove the *Seward Johnson* from the UNOLS Fleet (Rabalais/Coale).
- Annette suggested that the Council review the Guidelines for becoming a UNOLS Vessel and then determine if HBOI is operating in compliance.
- Bob Houtman – This is a major step and the Council should review all of the documentation and information before reaching a decision.
- Bob Collier suggested that an informational package be prepared.
- Bob Houtman – For clarification, NSF will not prevent HBOI from participating in the ship scheduling meeting.
- Linda Goad – The informational package should include the definition of Research Vessel as stated in the CFR and a copy of their Cooperative Agreement. The Coast Guard designation is the main authority in whether a ship meets the R/V designation. Each designation and how it is applied is specific to Coast Guard offices.
- Nancy Rabalais removed her motion regarding R/V *Seward Johnson*.
- Dan – HBOI should be informed that the Council is reviewing their designation.

- This issue will be added to the October agenda.
- Dan – R/V *Atlantis* is working with a cable company and R/V *Thompson* has operations planned at Neptune supported by the Canadians. How should UNOLS operators deal with the possibility of cruise cancellations? Linda – Operators can arrange fixed price contracts for the ship time.
- Bob Collier – It would be useful for operators to share experiences in this area that have been successful for them. Linda – This is a great idea for an RVOC agenda item.

Post Cruise Assessment Report (PCAR) Review - Annette reported that the PCAR committee has not met since the March Council meeting. The committee should try to meet by phone conference.

Discussion:

- Linda Goad commented that she likes the PCAR grading; it is very useful for NSF.
- John – he has heard that scientists are uncomfortable with the PCAR.

Gender Climate at Sea – Annette reported that the Research Vessel Safety Standards, Chapter 6 and Appendix E address sexual harassment issues. Mike Prince has polled vessel operators regarding a volunteer on-line training course and there is interest. Kenneth Coale said that he is familiar with Workplace Answers, the company that offers on-line training. He volunteered to work with Mike to make this possible.

Annual Meeting – Plans for the Annual Meeting were discussed. The Council suggested potential Keynote Presenters. The UNOLS Office will follow-up on the suggestions.

2009-2010 UNOLS Goals – The Council members were asked to make suggestions for Goals for the upcoming year. Vernon suggested that a goal should be to “Explore the relationship of working with OPP to coordinate support and use for Antarctic Research Vessels.” There was discussion of the Arctic fleet in relation to the Antarctic fleet. This topic will be explored further in future meetings.

Jon – A UNOLS office goal is to continue to work with a smooth transition from the MLML office to the new.

UNOLS 2009 Calendar:

Dan Schwartz –There is a SCOAR meeting that will be planned for CIRPAS. They might also have town meeting at Ocean Sciences in 2010.

1600 Adjourn Day Two