Ocean Observing Science Committee

By Larry Atkinson

The Ocean Observing Science Committee was formed last fall. Currently the members are Larry Atkinson (ODU, Chair), Mary Jo Richardson (TAMU), Steve DiMarco (TAMU), Emmanuel Boss (U Maine), and Suzanne Carbotte (LDEO). Additional members are still being recruited. We have met by phone once.

To refresh our memory on this developing Committee the charge is:

a. Provide advice on decisions and plans from the science perspective related to NSF ocean observatories (MARS, HOTS, BATS, OOI, and others) and ocean observing support systems. These may include the US Academic Research Fleet, AUV/ROVs, and other unmanned systems such as gliders. The OOSC will not review proposals, but rather provide a research community perspective on the strategic, tactical and prioritization issues that project teams and agencies are addressing for the portfolio of ocean observatories.

b. Represent science user perspectives. The OOSC will provide through the UNOLS process, the science user perspective to the project teams and the federal agencies that are developing, deploying and operating ocean observatories. The OOSC will develop a process and structure for effectively representing the community who use or who have interest in NSF ocean observatories and supporting systems.

c. Provide technical advice. The OOSC will be requested by NSF to review technical decisions and trade off analyses to inform decisions and provide advice as needed. This may require establishing subcommittees.

d. Project Reviews. NSF will conduct periodic performance reviews of the OOI construction project using personnel not associated with the OOI Project Team. The OOSC will be requested by NSF to observe (1-2 OOSC members) these reviews and provide science users perspectives.

e. Evaluate best practices across Ocean Observatories. The OOSC will identify and disseminate best practices for ocean observatories across both technical and managerial regimes.

f. Reporting. Reports of activities shall be made to the UNOLS membership on at least an annual basis and to the UNOLS Council at regularly scheduled Council meetings.

You know how large and complicated the OOI is so you can appreciate the feeling I get when I go over the charge. Right now our challenge is scope what the committee does over the coming year down to something both manageable and worthwhile to NSF and the community:

Feasibility – Before a PI submits a proposal they must go through a “feasibility” step. This is similar to filling out the UNOLS ship request form but it can get much more complicated. An example would be adding a new sensor to a moored array. Power, data and overall compatibility must be approved. Establishing this process and ensuring it works for PI’s will probably be the

main task of the OOSC. Note that the first parts of OOI will be commissioned and ready for PI use by early 2013 so this 'feasibility step' must be finalized soon.

Data Management – The OOSC will review the OOI Data Management Plan (DMP) in the coming month.

Finally, the OOSC must become reasonable knowledgeable about the OOI in just a few months. Obviously some prioritization is necessary.

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