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APPENDIX III. UNOLS Committee Reports

Committee Reports to the UNOLS Council
September 1997

Research Vessel Operators' Committee:

The 1997 RVOC meeting is scheduled to be held at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Woods Hole, Massachusetts on 21, 22, 23 October 1997. We have a full agenda for this meeting. In order to keep to this schedule many of the first days reports, specifically the "Special Reports" will be submitted as written reports with the period previously devoted to presentation of these reports now primarily being devoted to questions and answers. Of note on the agenda is-

Introductory presentation by Jamestown Marine. Jamestown Marine has been awarded the contract for the NSF ship inspection. They will be on hand to meet the members of RVOC and introduce personnel who will be carrying out the inspections.

A presentation will be made on marine communications. Existing and new systems that permit more effective communication and can be used to extend the Internet to sea. In conjunction with this there will be a presentation by SeaNet on JOI's recently funded proposal to provide five Inmarsat B installations on R/V's.

Three workshops are presently being planned to address the following topics:

Tech./Operator workshop - Invite reps. from RVTEC to discuss their needs and what operators should do to increase the technical viability of their platforms.

Medical standards workshop-Follow on to last year's work group.

Workshop to identify and standardize ancillary service and equipment costs normally charged to programs.

Other RVOC Activities Include:

The Safety Committee has assigned members to review and update of the various chapters of the RVOC Research Vessel Safety Standards. This revision is due in January 1999. Two new topics which need to be included in the Safety Standards are Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS).

The proposal for a Safety Training Video was funded. A meeting of the Safety Committee to address the production of this video is scheduled for 1,2,3 October 1997 at URI - GSO. Jamestown Marine was selected to produce the video and will be present for the meeting. Items to be addressed include:

Selection of topics to be covered in the video. These topics will be selected from Chapter I of the RVOC Safety Training Manual. Chapter 1 is the Research Party Supplement.

Establish schedule for script preparation.

Establish review and control procedures.

Discussion of ideas for shooting video.

Ship availability for shooting.

Submitted by Paul Ljunggren

Fleet Improvement Committee:

1. The IFIP97 has been further revised into the (hopefully) final draft form for the Council's review.
2. Increments have been added to the draft FIP98 by various FIC members.
3. Activity associated with planning for the construction of a mid-Pacific R/V has been placed on hold by ONR.
4. With cancellation of the FIC summer meeting on short notice, FIC does not have its usual high level of activity to report.
5. A message has been prepared for the Council (w/cc to FIC) summarizing the accomplishments and shortfalls of FIC over the past three years, and providing several recommendations.

Submitted by Chris Mooers

DEep Submergence Science Committee:

DESSC's deliberations and planning with the Deep Submergence Facility (DSF) operator, WHOI, and national funding agencies have resulted in an upgraded and completely overhauled ALVIN which has successfully been merged with the new R/V ATLANTIS. In addition to the overhaul WHOI has been funded by the federal agencies to upgrade navigation, imaging and operational equipment. DESSC is continuing to work with WHOI-DSF to upgrade the capabilities and data products of the vehicles, and to work on a policy and plan for archiving data from all of the DSF vehicles. Last Fall, DESSC asked WHOI review its management and operations policies and at the December DESSC meeting they presented an Integrated Deep Submergence Plan that outlined the integrations of ALVIN and ROV programs and provided for shore based and shipboard operations that accommodates various operational scenarios. The plan also addressed management communications within DSOG and with PI's planning to utilize DSOG facilities.

In June, ALVIN engineering dives and recertification took place off Bermuda. ATLANTIS/ALVIN

then completed two successful dive programs on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge; one that included filming by the British Broadcasting Corp and another that was in cooperation with U.K. BRIDGE scientists. ATLANTIS has also completed work off the California coast and is now on the Juan de Fuca Ridge completing several deep submergence research programs that were in serious jeopardy of being delayed for a year because of mechanical problems with R/V THOMPSON's Z-drive. The remainder of the year will see ALVIN/ATLANTIS on the northern EPR before ATLANTIS must undergo a NAVY Post Availability Shakedown (PSA) inspection in San Diego that will last until approximately April 1998. Jason, Argo-II and the DSL-120 sonar are working well and ready to be used on ATLANTIS and other UNOLS platforms in the coming year. DESSC and WHOI are working on methods to educate the community about Jason capabilities and the optimal operational approach for deep submergence field programs using the full suite of DSF vehicles. DESSC, UNOLS and WHOI have developed an on-line UNOLS/National Deep Submergence Facility Vehicle Request Form - DSV ALVIN, ROV Jason, Argo-II, DSL-120 Sonar, that can now be accessed on the World Wide Web through the Deep Submergence Operations Group at WHOI and the DESSC homepage.

Scheduling problems have plagued us for the past few months and were hopefully resolved at this week's scheduling meeting. Deep submergence facilities scheduling problems were compounded by the fact that ALVIN was in overhaul and many scientists have been waiting for more than a year to use ATLANTIS, and by the addition of unscheduled programs on the Juan de Fuca Ridge. There is so much funded science in diverse field areas, that arranging a schedule that meets all of the PÍOs needs/schedules/desires, funding agencies priorities and fiscal constraints, as well as the requirements for the Navy inspection in early 1998, has been complex; requiring extensive communication and coordination between all parties. DESSC has worked to facilitate communication and spent a significant portion of the July 16-18 DESSC meeting working together with funding agency representatives and the facility operator to achieve a workable schedule for 1998. The scheduling procedure is becoming more complicated with many more time-series programs being funded, the ability to use the ROV and tethered vehicles in different areas on other large UNOLS ships, and our new global approach to deep submergence science. DESSC will continue to advocate for increased facilities support for the excellent scientific programs that are being funded.

At last years UNOLS meeting, ONR asked DESSC for input regarding the effective utilization of the SEACLIFF and the facility needs of the US academic, deep submergence community. A preliminary response to these issues was provided to ONR in December 1996, and a specially convened Working Group met in March, 1997 to deliberate on these issues. The SEACLIFF Working Group completed a report that summarizes the responses by scientists who filled out a DESSC questionnaire regarding the future of deep submergence science. This report provides ONR with recommendations pertaining to specific options regarding the disposition of Navy assets. The full report can be obtained from the DESSC web site. The SEACLIFF Working Group and DESSC strongly recommended that ONR fund an engineering study to be carried out by WHOI so that well-constrained estimates of costs for the effective utilization of SEACLIFF for academic science can be made within the next 12-18 months.

The federal funding agencies also recently asked DESSC for input regarding interest in the academic community for using the Navy's ATV (Advanced Tethered Vehicle) that will be retired in 1998. DESSC sent a memo to the agencies stating that there is community interest in ATV, and supported a meeting (held on Tuesday) at NSF to discuss the operational capabilities of ATV.

DESSC plans to focus on topics associated with future (10-20 year) facility needs (submersible, ROV, AUV) for deep submergence science, science justifications for the facilities, and the potential fiscal impacts of various options for providing adequate deep submergence facilities that would serve academic research and possible strategic needs into the future.

Submitted by Mike Perfit

Research Vessel Technical Enhancement Committee:

Since the last Council meeting in Grand Haven progress has been made toward the RVTEC Annual meeting scheduled for October 27 through 29 in Seattle. A meeting room has been scheduled on the University of Washington campus and rooms have been blocked for participants at the Meany Tower close by. The meeting is being hosted by Neil Bogue from University of Washington with assistance from Mike Webb from NOAA PMC.

The major presentation will be made by Mr. Bill Riffe, president of Marine Environmental Research, and will be on the subject of Marine Corrosion and its impact on shipboard systems and overboard instruments. Arrangements are also being made with Sea-Bird Corporation for a plant tour and evening presentation at their facility. Sea-Bird is a major supplier of instrumentation used on board UNOLS vessels.

Other agenda items will include discussion of continuing efforts toward updating the salary survey for technicians originally conducted in about 1988 by Bill Coste, a report from the cable subcommittee headed by Don Moller of WHOI and report from the data standards sub-committee headed by Steve Poulos from University of Hawaii.

The RVTEC chair will be attending the JOI SeaNet workshop in Washington on 29-30 September and participation by SeaNet principals is expected at the RVTEC meeting in Seattle.

Respectfully submitted,
John S. Freitag

Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee:

Report from the UNOLS Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee to the UNOLS Council - September 1997

The UNOLS Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee (AICC) provides scientific oversight of Arctic polar science support on US surface vessels, with primary focus on USCGC Polar Star, USCGC Polar Sea, and the new USCGC HEALY. The AICC consists of eight members from the US academic community, and is supported by NSF and the US Coast Guard. We try to maintain ties to other agencies and organizations concerned with marine research in the Arctic.

While there has been little new business since the last report in June 1997, the following updates the last AICC report:

With regards to ship scheduling, we have recommended that the Coast Guard take advantage of the on-line system provided by the UNOLS Office. To that end, the AICC has moved towards scheduling the USCG Arctic science missions within the UNOLS framework and the icebreakers are now on the UNOLS on-line ship-time request site. The AICC would like to see seamless incorporation of the icebreakers into the UNOLS scheduling, notification, and tracking system. Having said that, there will be only limited opportunities for scheduled USCG Arctic science missions (i.e. other than ship-of-opportunity) until January 2000 when USCGC HEALY becomes available.

Presently, the dominant mode of operation for USCG Arctic science support is via the ship-of-opportunity (SOO) cruises. These cruises receive no agency cost recovery because their primary mission is to test the vessel(s) and to act as training missions for the USCG. The AICC has been tasked with the responsibility of coordinating science participation in the SOO cruises. Although the 1997 Arctic SOO program was canceled, we feel that the AICC coordination of the science plan went well. All requests were more or less feasible and we were able to put like-minded groups in contact with one another so that they could maximize their planned science programs. Each 1997 group will be contacted to see if they wish to participate in the planned 1998 SOO

cruise. Since there were a number of questions and concerns from the community regarding the AICC's role in SOO cruise planning, we have reformulated SOO guidelines for 1998 and have posted them on the UNOLS web site. We will also publicize them via electronic mailing lists and notices at appropriate national meetings.

SOO cruises exploit a gray area in science support, which has inevitably lead to some problems. Because such cruises are seen by some as fiscally advantageous to funding agencies, and may even be seen by some program managers as a preferred means of data acquisition support, we would like to note that SOO cruises carry considerable risks. Since there is no USCG commitment to science support for SOO cruises, when schedule changes materialize, there has been considerable disappointment on the part of investigators and their program managers, and as a result, image problems for the USCG. We note that true dedicated science missions will put the responsibility for ship support squarely upon the USCG. Such missions will test the USCG commitment to science missions and its readiness for science support operations.

The AICC has recommended that the planned field testing of USCGC HEALY in 1999 not be considered an SOO. We asked the USCG to concentrate on tests and training without being constrained by accomplishing "good science" on its maiden voyage at the expense of fully testing all systems. UNOLS is assisting the Coast Guard with identification of science groups to assist with and monitor the science systems tests. The AICC feels it is very important that procedures be worked out to provide "corporate memory" for science systems support. During HEALY construction, John Boaz, a senior technician at SIO, has been contracted by the USCG (through NSF) for consultation on science systems. In the long-term, because of the nature of USCG assignment rotation, the AICC felt it best to have some form of civilian science support. This topic continues to be under discussion.

One issue of concern to the AICC - scientific clearance in foreign EEZs - has been largely laid to rest. The final step of having the Coast Guard play the same role as a UNOLS operator will probably be adopted following additional consultations between the Coast Guard and the UNOLS Office. AICC questions regarding HEALY's status under Canadian regulations appear to have been resolved satisfactorily.

The AICC continues to build liaisons, for example with RVTEC and the Antarctic Research Vessel Oversight Committee while the AICC e-mail list continues to expand. Progress on USCGC HEALY and work of the AICC was presented to the Arctic Research Commission at their meeting in Barrow, Alaska in August.

At present, USCGC HEALY brings no new dedicated ship/science funds from the federal funding agencies. The AICC hopes that via publicity of the new ship's capabilities and the ease of submitting shiptime requests through the UNOLS ship scheduling process, planned use of USCGC HEALY will generate the number and type of cutting edge proposals envisioned by planners. We feel that availability of HEALY on the UNOLS on-line request system is a first step in developing the proposal pressure that can help engender commitment of new science funds.

With respect to HEALY construction, progress has been good and launch is expected in late 1997. In exchange for a six-month delivery delay, the shipyard agreed to complete most of the "top 10" science-related modifications requested by the AICC. We regard this as a strongly positive move which will greatly benefit science support. Delivery is set for December 1998 with most of 1999 planned as shakedown and testing. We plan to tour HEALY at our next scheduled meeting in New Orleans, tentatively planned for January or February 1998.

APPENDIX IV. Statistics of Ship Usage 1995-98