

APPENDIX V

UNOLS FIC Report

Prepared by Chris Mooers, 5 Sep 96

1. FIC has been engaged in contingency planning in case downsizing of the UNOLS Fleet becomes necessary. It has prepared a draft Interim Fleet Improvement Plan (IFIP), as a follow-up to the "Betzer Report", that outlines generic options. However, the IFIP awaits updates on NAVO's and NOAA's likely demand for the UNOLS Fleet and other revisions.
2. FIC has been laying the groundwork for FIP98 and several important factors have come to light in the process of developing the IFIP that suggest a strong need to focus FIP98 on the UNOLS Fleet of 2010. For example, while our attention has been focused on the short-term problem of excess capacity, many of our present vessels will be retired by 2010. Hence, the clearest possible vision of the fleet needed for 2010 is required to lay the groundwork for new construction early in the next decade.
3. FIC has been placing a higher priority on ensuring a highly capable fleet rather than necessarily maintaining a large size for the fleet. To this end, it has groups studying the evolution of the fleet as real-time data platforms and the technological upgrading of the fleet. (Eric, please discuss the ideas you and Rich Findley have been developing.) Also, it has received briefings from ONR program managers on developmental programs for AUV's and RPV'S, which have the potential to extend the experimental capacity of R/Vs.
4. FIC will focus its (early) winter meeting on outlining science mission requirements for a mid-pacific general purpose oceanographic vessel. Scientific representatives from the Univ. of Hawaii and California institutions will be invited to participate. Placing such a vessel in the context of overall regional needs for the fleet in 2010 will be an important step. If this process is effective, similar consideration of the future scientific needs of the other three major regions will be attempted as input to defining national needs for the fleet of 2010.
5. Overall, the lack of long-range ocean science planning, especially for large science projects/programs, is a serious limitation for planning the future fleet. Fortunately, the OSB has recently initiated a large ocean science planning effort that should help in that regard.