

APPENDIX X

A 25 Year History of UNOLS

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History of UNOLS

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of UNOLS, it appears appropriate to reflect on the origins of the system and its history in order to see how far we have come over the past quarter century. There are some who doubted UNOLS would be here now, and a "Sunset Clause" was hurriedly added to the first draft charter for UNOLS to expire unless periodically renewed by a vote of the members. And renewed it was - time and time again - until here we are.

What we see now is a larger, stronger, and more aggressive UNOLS: 57 members compared to the original 17; and a fleet of larger, newer, and more capable vessels, almost totally replaced from the original.

The roots of UNOLS go back to the 1960's, called by many, the golden years of oceanography. Marine science was in; funding flowed freely; existing labs were expanding and new labs were being established. More and more research ships were putting to sea (some of which should not have). In order to support operations in some new big programs such as the Indian Ocean Expedition, Biological Expeditions, Education, and submersible extravaganzas, several ships were being block-funded (Alpha Helix, Williamsburg, Te Vega, Eastward, Alvin, etc.). This was an expediency limited to special uses, but proved to be an interesting concept. Several individuals, namely Dick Bader and John Lyman of NSF and Ned Ostenso of ONR thought this idea might be applied to general purpose academic ships. It was started and thus began the program of annual support grants for ship operations. It soon caught on; by 1969 there were 33 vessels from 17 academic labs all eating at the federal trough. More were looking on.

About this same time, in 1969, the President's commission on Marine Science and Engineering (called the Stratton Commission) in its classic report set forth a recommendation for National Oceanographic Laboratories intended to be a partnership between federal agencies and academic institutions for a full range of research, facilities and funding support. However, unlike other aspects of the Report (such as the establishment of Sea Grant and NOAA), it was not well-defined. Viewed by the Feds as "control" and by academia as "send-more-money", it did not progress very far.

By 1970 the support of research ships was becoming big business: more users, more ships, and rising costs. Investigators from non-ship operating labs were demanding more access to ship time. Federal agencies, particularly NSF, started looking for some element of coordination - even control. The idea of National Oceanographic Laboratories (NOLS) was dusted off as a means to direct and schedule the academic fleet. The Labs viewed this as a takeover and were horrified. A group including Art Maxwell of WHOI, Bill Nierenberg of SIO, John Knauss of URI, Maurice Ewing of LDGO, John Byrne of OSU, and others worked out a counter proposal for a University-National Oceanographic System (UNOLS). This would be a loose, self-governing academic association to exercise the coordination and controls desired by the Feds. Working with Tom Owen and Mary Johrde of NSF, Ned Ostenso of ONR, and others, an arrangement was agreed upon.

On 22 September 1971, the seventeen labs which operated federally funded vessels met at Lamont and drew up a charter for UNOLS. Key provisions included were efficient ship scheduling, accommodation for all investigators, and adherence to uniform standards. Art Maxwell was elected chairman; a UNOLS Office was established at Woods Hole to be funded by several federal agencies, chiefly NSF and ONR; and Bob Dinsmore, an ex-Coast Guard oceanographer and former staff member of the Stratton Commission was hired as Executive Secretary. The Charter was adopted at the first regular UNOLS meeting at Texas A & M, College Station, in May 1972.

At the outset, the main thrust of UNOLS was coordinated ship scheduling and the placement of federally funded investigators on federally funded ships. The shiptime request forms still in use today were the earliest products of UNOLS. Ship scheduling has continued over the years as a major role. In order to achieve the optimum procedure, various sundry practices have been tried. These included: centralized scheduling, East Coast - West Coast, expeditionary, big-ship/little-ship, lottery, computerized and smoke-filled room sessions. The search for the perfect scheme appears to be continuing even now.

A hidden agenda in the formation of UNOLS was fleet replacement. Over two-thirds of the ships then sailing were mission obsolete; that is, not adequate to the tasks coming along. Most were becoming platform obsolete as well. The agenda did not remain hidden very long. By the Fall of 1972, working groups were formed leading to the replacement of the intermediate ships - mostly wartime cargo ships; and construction of new coastal vessels. These working groups later were consolidated into a Fleet Replacement Committee - now our permanent Fleet Improvement Committee. That these groups did their job well is a matter of record.

The original makeup of UNOLS comprised seventeen labs operating thirty vessels. These were:

Alaska	Acona
Hawaii	Kana Keoki, Teritu
Washington	Thompson, Hoh, Onar
Oregon State	Yaquina, Cayuse
Stanford	Proteus
S. California	Velero IV
Scripps	Melville, Washington, Agassiz, E. B. Scripps
Michigan	Inland Seas
Texas A & M	Alaminos
Woods Hole	Knorr, Atlantis II, Chain, Gosnold
Rhode Island	Trident
Lamont	Conrad, Vema
Johns Hopkins	Warfield, Maury
Duke	Eastward
Skidaway	Kit Jones
Miami	Gilliss, Calanus
Florida State	Tursiops

From this list there have been dropouts, retirements, and replacements. Only three of the original fleet remain and credit for much of this goes to the replacement efforts within UNOLS.

When organized, the UNOLS Members dedicated themselves to keeping everybody else out. Naturally, non-members were suspicious and wanted in. Other operators having or acquiring vessels thought membership was an open door to funding. (How wrong they were). Investigators and users wanted better access and a say in the System. There were some real battles for awhile. Some original members departed with their ships: Stanford, Florida State, Nova. New members began to join: Texas, Delaware, Moss Landing. Associate Memberships were created in order to placate the community. This ultimately has led to the now present single membership more representative of the community.

Shortly following the establishment of UNOLS, the Research Vessel Operators Council (RVOC), which was an older body by eight years, was incorporated into UNOLS. RVOC originally was established to work with the Coast Guard in developing and implementing the Research Vessels Act. This role completed, RVOC as a part of UNOLS was able to bring together much of the working elements of research ship operations. In this capacity, RVOC has become an essential part of UNOLS.

At the Fall 1972 meeting at Scripps, there were sown the seeds of UNOLS efforts which have come to fruition and continue to this day: Coastal Ships, Uniform standards, Foreign Clearances, Technical

Services, National Facilities and, of course, Fleet Replacement.

In accordance with the early direction, attention was turned to specialized facilities. A Charter Annex established National Oceanographic Facilities. These included the Expeditionary Vessel Alpha Helix; the Deep Submersible Alvin; and the Scripps Aircraft (uniquely designated as one-half a facility). Other candidates included Buoy Groups, Technician Groups, MG&G Facilities, and special platforms such as FLIP. For the duration of support needed, the efforts were successful. Economy, however, placed reins on increasing the number. The only continuing one is the Deep Submergence Facility which appears highly successful and is growing in scope.

Additional thrusts generated by UNOLS include Safety Standards and Foreign Clearances. Safety Standards were brought about in response to the tragic loss of R/V Gulf Stream in 1954 and have been incorporated into the Research Vessel Inspection Program. These Standards have been recognized by the National Transportation Safety Board as a unique and hallmark contribution to maritime safety. We at UNOLS can be proud of this.

Foreign Clearance procedures was borne amidst the Law of the Sea chaos in the early 70's. Procedures were spearheaded by UNOLS to facilitate the conduct of research in the burgeoning areas of the ocean being claimed by coastal nations. The orderly arrangements set up by UNOLS have been highly successful and have been copied worldwide.

Many of these events have not been without their humorous side. Safety Standards were expedited when one of our ships almost sawed itself in half by hauling in 4,000 meters of hydrowire across its bottom. And Foreign clearances were given a push when one of our ships pulled into Angola and inadvertently hoisted a rebel flag (sold to them by a devious ship chandler).

In summary, UNOLS has come a long way since the sunset clause was added to its charter in 1971. We can take pride in what has been accomplished over the past 25 years. There is a lot more to do, so the next 25 years should be just as productive.