



Community Updates

2024 FUTURE Workshop Recap



The FUTURE of US Marine Seafloor/Subseafloor sampling capabilities workshop was held from March 26-28 in Woods Hole, MA. The event brought a variety of participants from various career paths and disciplines, opening the doors for collaboration in oceanography requiring seafloor and subseafloor samples. In attendance were 132 in-person participants – approximately half of whom were early career scientists – from 63 U.S. institutions. 68 remote participants joined from both US and non-US institutions.

Day 1 entailed discussing scientific questions that require seafloor sampling, and Day 2 focused on how these questions are being addressed with tools and technologies. Presentations spanned a wide variety of topics, including sediment sampling via coring and drilling, the HOV Alvin and ROV Jason programs, and seafloor fluid and volatile sampling.

For more information, view the presentations [here](#).

An Oceanographic Educational Experience Through VR

A major challenge in science education is gaining student interest and recruitment into STEM-based careers. The "Sailing with GEOTRACES" virtual reality experience, designed by LIVE Lab and the School of Performance, Visualization and Fine Arts at Texas A&M University, aims to address this issue by communicating ocean science in a relatable way to the greater community. Footage from the GP17-OCE expedition to the South Pacific and Southern Oceans was converted into this virtual reality experience. The product targets all ages and entails short games and an isometric view of the R/V Roger Revelle that participants can explore.

Read more [here](#).

Marine Technical Internship Program



Photo courtesy of Sarah Gisler

Read about the experiences of 2024 interns: [MATE - Marine Advanced Technology Education :: Internship Blog!](#) Sarah Gisler was hosted by the University of Alaska Fairbanks Marine Technical Team on board the R/V Sikuliaq. In her farewell [Week 9 \(Gisler\): Goodbye For Now](#), she wrote, "I can enthusiastically say that I was able to positively contribute to the tech team and that I have been hooked by this industry. The people aboard the Sikuliaq are amazing, passionate about what they do, and so kind. I feel lucky to have been able to work alongside them for this short period of time and to call them friends." Sarah has been hired to return to the R/V Sikuliaq this summer to work as a Relief Technician.

Noah Bourassa is currently on board the R/V Atlantis providing support for the WHOI NDSF HOV Alvin Team. Noah posted some advice for future interns: "Network, network, network. Talk to everyone, and pick their brains [...]. There are some incredible people that work on board UNOLS vessels, and they are all very personable and willing to chat [...]. Squeeze every ounce out of the MATE internship, because it will get you some very valuable connections, skills, and experience [...]. Be enthusiastic and positive, I promise that it won't go unnoticed [...]. A good mood goes a long way, as well as a good work ethic." Read more: [Sea of Cortez](#)

Committee News

UNOLS Transit Policy

In 2017 UNOLS published the policy regarding how costs associated with transits, for the purposes of relocating Academic Research Fleet ships to research areas, area allocated to ship users and their funding sources. The [policy](#) should be reviewed and considered by PIs when they prepare proposals for oceanographic research work on ARF ships. It's important to take this into account early in the process so that PIs and funders of the cruises are not surprised during the scheduling process that there may be additional costs associated with a project due to the need to relocate ships to a research area. PIs are encouraged to discuss with the [ship schedulers](#) and/or the UNOLS Office (doug@unols.org) as ship-time requests are prepared and submitted.

DeSSC New User Program



On February 17-18, the DeSSC New User program was held at Loyola University in New Orleans, LA. This is the first time this program was hosted in conjunction with the Ocean Science Meeting. The program was held Saturday, and all attendees attended the DeSSC Community meeting on Sunday. 21 new users attended, from 15 different institutions including Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Scripps Institute of Oceanography, and NOAA Ocean Exploration.

Representatives from NDSF and other vehicle operators such as SOI, OET, FIO and the Canadian Scientific Submersible Facility presented on a variety of deep sea ocean technologies and on current oceanographic research. This event offered a great opportunity to introduce participants to the vehicles as well as the deep submergence community.

For more information, view the presentations [here](#).

Fleet Highlights

New hydrothermal vents discovered in the eastern Pacific with help of deep-sea robot Sentry

In mid-March, R/V Atlantis returned to San Diego from an NSF-funded expedition to the eastern Pacific Ocean. Scientists teamed up with a deep-sea robot called Sentry, an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV), to discover five hydrothermal vents on the seafloor at 2,550 meters with temperatures higher than 300°C (570°F). Sentry provided high-resolution maps that enable scientists to take the human-occupied vehicle (HOV) Alvin to witness these vents.

Hydrothermal systems, despite extreme heat and pressure, supply energy to animal life and allow deep-sea ecosystems to thrive. EPR's program focuses on researching hydrothermal vents, which are the result of new seafloor formation from volcanic activity. Scientists are planning a follow-up expedition using Sentry and Alvin again to further explore these deep ocean processes.

Read more about the expedition [here](#).

RCRV Program Update

OSU's Dr. Claire Reimers, Regional Class Research Vessel Project Scientist, provided a project update during the recent Council Meeting. Steady progress continues for all three vessels. Of note, the aluminum superstructure was recently landed on the hull for the Narraganset Dawn. The project now anticipates delivery of R/V Taani to OSU in July 2025. R/V Narraganset Dawn is expected to be delivered 4-6 months after that with R/V Gilbert R. Mason following with a similar time frame. Each ship will undergo outfitting, crew training/familiarization, science system testing, trials, transit to homeport, warranty haul out, and NSF Inspection before they begin science operations - approximately one year after delivery.

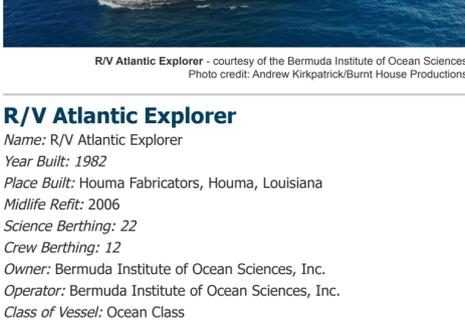
Crewing Corner



2024 is proving to be a successful year for the vessels of the U.S. Academic Research Fleet (ARF) in regards to crewing. Thus far, zero operational days have been lost due to a crewing issue which is a major accomplishment in comparison to years 2020, 2021, and 2022. This can be attributed to many factors to include increased wages across the Fleet, the return to calling into foreign ports, good connectivity while at sea, and hitch length. In addition to the weekly "UNOLS Open Crew Positions" email, which highlights the available positions aboard all of the ARF vessels for that week, now reaches over 450 credentialed mariners. This new tool has proven to have a significant impact on identifying qualified mariners to fill positions.

The U.S Maritime Administration (MARAD) recently held the first "Mariner Work-Life Balance Symposium" in Washington DC and UNOLS was asked to be at the table. The goal of the symposium was to share ideas on how to attract more mariners as well as identify why mariners are leaving the industry and address those reasons. It was an incredible opportunity to describe the ARF to industry partners as well as learn what issues other companies and operators are facing. Overall, the major issues facing mariners in the U.S. can fall under four categories: wages, hitches, connectivity, and culture. Relatively speaking, the ARF is excelling in the latter three categories with wages continuing to be lower than commercial entities. UNOLS looks forward to being a part of future conversations regarding mariners and sharing that information with operators and crew.

Featured Ship



R/V Atlantic Explorer - courtesy of the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences
Photo credit: Andrew Kirkpatrick/Burnt House Productions

R/V Atlantic Explorer

Name: R/V Atlantic Explorer
Year Built: 1982
Place Built: Houma Fabricators, Houma, Louisiana
Midlife Refit: 2006
Science Berthing: 22
Crew Berthing: 12
Owner: Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences, Inc.
Operator: Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences, Inc.
Class of Vessel: Ocean Class

R/V ATLANTIC EXPLORER's deck crew and motormen travel from their homes in the Philippines to keep the 42-year-old ship running smoothly and looking spotless. The vessel's two Bosuns, Ronnie and Jojo, have been the backbone of the vessel for the past 20 years. The crew foster a home away from home with filipino barbecues, pig roasts, and karaoke for science party and crew alike.



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Featured Photo



Lava pillar at the East Pacific Rise (EPR) axis near 10° 05'N, ~2560 m depth, imaged on Alvin Dive 5247 during expedition AT50-21 in March 2024. The lava pillar is hosting a giant Actinaria anemone on top, with a small, stalked euplectellid glass sponge at the base of the anemone, and a 12-arm brisingid sea star attached to the side of the pillar. Image was taken with a WHOI-MISO GoPro deep-sea camera system mounted on Alvin's front basket. National Deep Submergence Facility, Alvin Group. Funding support from the National Science Foundation. ©Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, 2024.

Upcoming Events

2024 Annual RVOC Meeting
01-02 May 2024
Westin Nova Scotian
Halifax, Nova Scotia

2024 DeSSC Spring Meeting
08-09 May 2024
WHOI
Woods Hole, Massachusetts

2024 RVTEC Meeting
21-25 October 2024
University of New Hampshire
Portsmouth, NH

2024 Fall Council & Annual Meeting
20-21 November 2024
Skidaway
Savannah, Georgia

Did you know...

Did you know that the schedules can be viewed and downloaded from MFP as a Table view? This view is more similar to the old STRS view and might be easier to read. As part of this, the schedules can be downloaded to your calendar to make sure you receive LIVE updates of the ship schedules. For a quick tutorial watch the <1min video [here](#).



UNIVERSITY-NATIONAL OCEANOGRAPHIC LABORATORY SYSTEM

From the Editor

Thank you to all who contributed information and articles for this issue of UNOLS News. Articles are always welcome and encouraged.

Copy, links, or images and questions can be submitted by e-mail to media@unols.org.

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