UNOLS News

Exciting updates from UNOLS & the Academic Research Fleet

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Community Updates

Captain Anthony "Diego" Mello

The oceanographic research committee was saddened to recently learn of the passing of Captain Anthony ("Diego") Mello after a long career as a Coast Guardsman and as a Merchant Mariner sailing on Academic Research Fleet ships. Capt. Diego was well known to many in our community as a superb Captain, excellent shipmate, and a dedicated mariner who ensured the ship's crews, marine technicians, and scientists were safe and successful during their cruises on R/V Oceanus, the JOIDES Resolution, and R/V Sikuliaq. For those who were fortunate to meet and sail with Capt. Diego – we were blessed to have those opportunities.

WHOI posted a wonderful tribute to Capt. Diego that can be found here.

The Impacts of American Security Drone Act of 2023 on UASs in the US ARF

The American Security Drone Act of 2023 is part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2024. The Act prohibits federal procurement and operation of drones manufactured in "covered foreign entities". This includes drones manufactured by DJI, which are a very popular, inexpensive systems often used within the U.S. ARF. The Act's effective as of December 22, 2025.

Why this law? Drones from "covered entities" pose a security risk because their software allows data to be sent back to the manufacturer. Operators cannot control this data flow, as it is integrated into the drone's operating system.

If you or any members of your scientific team intend to use drones during science cruises, please address this early in your pre-cruise planning discussions. Consider operating a drone from the Blue UAS Cleared List which are not restricted. More information on the Act can be found here.

New NSF sponsored Advancing Field Safety Training Program and Newsletter are Available

Prioritizing safety and safeguarding against identity-based harassment and other exclusionary behaviors in field campaigns is critical to ensure safe and productive research environments. While harassment and discrimination in the field are not new phenomena, widespread recognition of their prevalence and harm has led to demands for increased training and preparation and culture change. The goal of ADVANCING FieldSafety is to create and disseminate a field safety, anti-harassment, and bystander intervention certificate training program that is accompanied by the development of a toolkit to support field teams in planning safe and inclusive field campaigns.

ADVANCING FieldSafety has a brand new online course. There is also a synchronous reflection session, and a toolkit to support field teams in planning welcoming, inclusive, and safe field campaigns, and offer a certificate program. Sign up for their Newsletter here.

Committee News

Departing Members

Thank you so much to the following individuals for their contributions to the UNOLS community:

- Dr. Hanumat Singh / Northeastern University / SCOAR
- Dr. Roni Avissar / University of Miami / SCOAR
- Dr. Armin Sorooshian / University of Arizona / SCOAR

New Committee Members

All of our committees are staffed by volunteers and we are grateful for their contributions of time and experience. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest committee members:

- Dr. Gijs de Boer / CIRES / SCOAR
- Dr. Liane Guild / NASA Ames / SCOAR
- Dr. Mikael Witte / NPS / SCOAR

2024 RVTEC Meeting Recap

The recent RVTEC meeting marked a transition from a meeting to a full-fledged conference, boasting a record number of attendees with 165 participants in person and over 20 joining online. This impressive turnout underscores the growing complexities of sea-going technical services as well as the need for community-based solutions. A special thanks goes to the University of New Hampshire for hosting the event at their excellent venue, which provided an ideal setting for both formal sessions and informal networking.

Friday's agenda featured three well-attended training options, offering valuable learning opportunities for all participants. The conference proved to be an excellent platform for technicians to forge new relationships and collaboratively address technical challenges. The conference presentations will soon be posted on the RVTEC Conference webpage.

Launch & Recovery System (LARS) Report is Out!

The Launch and Recovery System (LARS) Working Group, which includes technicians, operators, and subject matter experts from the fleet, has successfully completed the LARS Report. This comprehensive document provides an overview of the fleet's current systems, details incidents related to the system over the past few years, and offers a set of informed recommendations.

The document is linked to in the Documents & Publications section of the RVTEC webpage and can be found here.

Fleet Highlights

The 2025 UNOLS-MATE Marine Technical Internship Program is now accepting applications! For a list of requirements and a link to the application form, click APPLY

Read about Kristine Prado-Casillas (pictured above) internship experience on the RV Pt. Sur.

Week 1: Getting to know the Pt. Sur
Week 2: Adventures on the Pt. Sur
Week 3: Mud cruise and chirp data
Week 4: ROV Cruise!

The R/V Savannah has Completed its Mid-life Refit

After 224 days in the shipyard, the R/V Savannah returned to Skidaway Island, GA, on May 13, 2024, following a mid-life refit at Stevens Towing Shipyard in Yonges Island, SC. This refit included over 50 major service life extension and science enhancement projects, along with various smaller repairs. Notable updates included:

Service Life Enhancements:

- Replacement of main engine, transmission, and throttle control
- New generators and switchboard
- Bow thruster replacement
- Restoration of hull, tanks, and bilges
- Modifications to sea chests

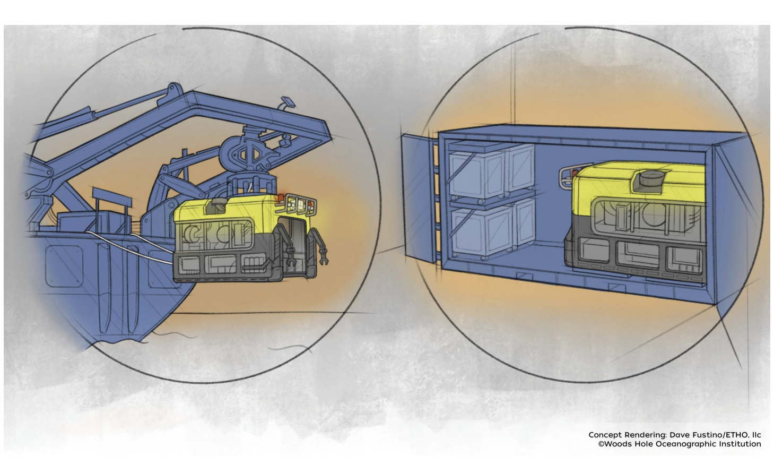
Science/Mission Enhancements:

- Main deck extension, increasing length by 12 feet (from 92 to 104 feet)
- Increased A-frame vertical clearance
- J-frame replacement
- Laboratory upgrades
- Uniform deck socket pattern
- RHIB replacement
- New pump for flow surface sensor array (BIOME)

Built in 2001, the R/V Savannah is entering its 23rd year of supporting scientific research along the eastern seaboard and Gulf of Mexico. In 2024, the vessel has 135 days scheduled, with its first research cruise on May 16-17 for the NOAA-funded SECOORA offshore mooring program.

This refit was made possible by funding from the National Science Foundation, University of Georgia, University System of Georgia, and the State of Georgia, along with the dedicated efforts of the crew at the Skidaway Institute.

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution Receives NSF and NOAA Funding for New Family of Remotely Operated Vehicles



Concept Rendering: Dave Fustino/ETHO, llc
©Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) has been awarded grants from the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to develop two medium-sized remotely operated vehicles (ROVs). These vehicles will address the increasing need for research, exploration, and restoration efforts on the seafloor and within the water column, particularly from vessels with limited deck space and berthing capabilities. Construction of the vehicles is set to begin in 2024, with engineering trials scheduled for late 2025, and they are expected to be fully operational for the scientific community by 2027. Read more about these exciting new assets in the WHOI press release.

R/P FLIP Lives On!

The R/P FLIP (Floating Instrument Platform), the U.S. Navy's legendary research platform that was towed to its study area and then stood on end like a floating skyscraper, served as a significant tool in oceanographic research, demonstrating advanced engineering and human curiosity. After over 50 years of service, R/P FLIP's last research cruise was in late 2017, with ONR ending its support of the vessel in 2020. As it made its way to a scrapyard in Mexico, it was saved from its final resting place and given a new life. DEEP, the subsea design firm with ambitions to pioneer underwater human habitats purchased the R/P FLIP and has intentions of outfitting it for future science. Read more about R/P FLIP's future here.

Crewing Corner

The autumn maritime academy career fair season has just come to close. It was marked with continued interest and excitement from cadets to work within the U.S. Academic Research Fleet both for their internship and upon graduation. The UNOLS office is currently gathering data about crew cadets/interns such as how many cadets/interns each ship hosts per year, what program they are in, and most importantly, whether they come back to the ARF after their training experience. The numbers are starting to flow in, so the hope is to provide this information during the fall UNOLS Council Meeting.

Speaking of data, the UNOLS office has also created an ARF New Hire Survey in order to learn about the crew members that are being hired into the Fleet. The short, 9-question survey will help us understand how crew are learning about the open positions as well as why they chose research vessels over other areas of the maritime industry. This information will help us hone our outreach efforts. In addition, we are gathering demographic information to better understand our fleet as a whole.

MFP News

Confused by what *seems* to be 2 different IDs for your scheduled project? Don't be! **Published projects have 2 separate workflows**. The **SME workflow** covers the steps to submit an SME, confirm the funding and schedule the project. Once the project is scheduled, the SME workflow is marked Complete and a second, **Cruise Planning workflow** is generated. This Cruise Planning workflow covers all the steps to plan a successful cruise.

Featured Ship

R/V SALLY RIDE Photo taken by Captain Ian Lawrence

R/V SALLY RIDE

Name: R/V SALLY RIDE
Year Built: 2016
Place Built: Dakota Creek Industries (Anacortes, WA)
Science Berthing: 26
Crew Berthing: 21
Owner: Office of Naval Research
Operator: Scripps Institution of Oceanography
Class of Vessel: Ocean Class

On June 18, 1983, Dr. Sally Ride made history as the first American woman to journey into space. She later became a physics professor at UC San Diego and co-founded Sally Ride Science at the university. UCSD honors her legacy by promoting STEM education and inspiring young people to pursue careers in science and engineering. Her flight jacket -- and her posthumously-awarded American Medal of Freedom -- are now proudly displayed in the messroom of the research vessel named after her: R/V *SALLY RIDE*.

R/V SALLY RIDE Photo taken by Erik Jepsen

PDF versions of the Newsletter can be found here. To unsubscribe from UNOLS News, please reply to this email with the word "unsubscribe" in the body. Thank you!

Featured Photo

Crew and scientists onboard the R/V Neil Armstrong, witnessing a display of the Northern Lights during their expedition in the polar region for BIOPOLE.

Upcoming Events

2024 OBSIC-OS Meeting
31-1 October 2024
University of Washington
Seattle, WA

2024 Fall AMRCC Meeting
14-15 November
University of Washington
Seattle, WA

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

2024 Winter MSROC Meeting
8 December 2024
Alexandria, VA

2024 AGU Ancillary AMRCC Meeting
10 December 2024
Washington, D.C.

2025 Winter AICC Meeting
8-10 January 2025
USCG Base Seattle
Seattle, WA

Did you know...

Did you know science provided over the side handling gear and tension members must comply with the RVSS Appendices A & B before being used on an US ARF Vessel? More information about Appendices A&B can be found here.

Compliance takes time and planning must begin very early in the Cruise Planning process.

UNOLS
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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