APPENDIX VI

Report from the Chair of the UNOLS Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee to the UNOLS Council - based on presentation at the UNOLS Council meeting 16-17 January 1997, Biosphere2, Tucson, Arizona

The UNOLS Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee (AICC) was established September 1996 to provide scientific oversight of Arctic polar science support on US vessels. There are eight members from the US academic community. The AICC is supported by NSF and the US Coast Guard, and maintains (and is strengthening) ties to agencies supporting Arctic research from vessels as well to science organizations concerned with Arctic research from vessels.

The AICC members are:

Jim Swift, SIO, Chair (jswift@ucsd.edu)
Lisa Clough, East Carolina University
Joe Coburn, WHOI
Glenn Cota, Old Dominion University
Kelly Falkner, Oregon State University
Larry Lawver, University of Texas at Austin
Dan Lubin, SIO
Tom Weingartner, University of Alaska
Jack Bash, UNOLS executive secretary
Ken Johnson, UNOLS Chair

The AICC 1997 business includes:

Moving ship scheduling towards the UNOLS format
Providing science-of-opportunity guidelines
Overseeing production of a "Chief Scientist" pamphlet
Identifying steps to provide technical support continuity
Coordination of science missions
Support for future science initiatives
Oversight of science aspects of HEALY construction/outfitting

The Science of Opportunity guidelines are an attempt to provide community communication and coordination for what are expected to be annual opportunities to carry out occasional "not to interfere" science programs during Coast Guard training and test cruises in the Arctic, without any "day rate" charge being assessed to the science program (and with no assurance that the science program will be carried out). The AICC's 1997 program is a trial to establish procedures. The 1997 opportunity and attendant guidelines have been provided to the community.

The construction of the USCGC HEALY provides some of the most urgent present business for the AICC. The US academic community was involved in planning for the Arctic Research Vessel (ARV), and some have been caught unawares by the cancellation of the ARV and construction of the HEALY. Bringing news of the HEALY status to the community and acting on community concerns and ideas - for a ship which is already well under construction - provides a challenge for the AICC.

One working definition of USCGC HEALY is that this is "a modern polar research vessel designed to be operated by the US Coast Guard for the US polar science community." The vessel is a large, 4-season polar research vessel with icebreaking capacity projected to be about one class reduced from that of the Coast Guard's Polar class icebreakers. Ship costs on science missions will likely be partly underwritten by the Coast Guard and partly charged to the sponsoring agencies, perhaps at a "$20,000/day" type of rate. Crewing with 75 (including 14 in the aviation group) and the near-exclusive science mission represent

significant departures from past Coast Guard norms.

The AICC has held an internal workshop with the Coast Guard regarding the science-related layout and specifications, and has come up with a number of recommendations, including:

- increasing area and bench space in labs
- improve traffic flow
- fantail staging area
- choices for vans
- lab temp control
- seawater temp monitor/control
- area for incubations
- reduce/move science freezer
- stowage for on-ice equipment
- relocate dive locker
- work area visibility
- portable lab freezers and refrigerators
- portable con station
- upgrade data archiving

The Coast Guard has been receptive to these concerns, and for example has proposed a revision of the layout of the main deck science areas that would greatly improve the highest priority concerns on the AICC list.

The flow and urgency of issues regarding the HEALY tend to overwhelm the AICC at times. The AICC in the coming year may suggest that the Coast Guard subcontract with a UNOLS marine operator for routine HEALY consulting, providing direct contact between the subcontractor and USCG, monitored by the AICC. Increased access to technical expertise may also be provided via RVTECH and possibly adding to AICC membership. And the AICC will form closer ties with the community involved with Palmer, Thompson, Revelle, and Atlantis construction and scientific outfitting.

The AICC does not propose that all community concerns regarding the HEALY will be solved, or that they are all solvable. It is clear, however, that the context of recent events makes the HEALY the "Arctic Research Vessel" for the beginning of the next century. We must make the best of this resource and opportunity, providing a fair trial, as we form long-term plans for US Arctic logistics. The working relationship between the AICC and the Coast Guard regarding HEALY matters is cordial and effective. The AICC is strongly heartened and cautiously optimistic. There are many hurdles to overcome, but it appears that within the framework of options available that the AICC and Coast Guard are off to an excellent start

Via reports from its meetings and discussions with the Council, the AICC will keep UNOLS informed of the status of its business. We invite suggestions and participation from the UNOLS community.