

# The Federal Agencies

And UNOLS

# RVOC

- The first organized group of ship operators was actually the Research Vessel Operators Council. This was an informal group of ship operators from academic institutions that began meeting in 1962 to discuss common interests and operating problems. The more formal UNOLS structure known today arose from this group.

# Origins of UNOLS

## What is UNOLS?

- University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS) is an organization of 61 academic institutions, consortia, and National Laboratories involved in oceanographic research and joined for the purpose of coordinating oceanographic ships' schedules and research facilities.

The original UNOLS Charter was written in 1972 and most recently revised in 2004. As of May 1, 2000, the office for UNOLS is located at Moss Landing Marine Laboratories in Moss Landing, California. The office will be recompleted in 2009.

- One of the primary functions of UNOLS is to ensure the efficient scheduling of scientific cruises aboard the 23 research vessels located at 18 operating institutions in the UNOLS organization. Both current and future schedules for these ships are available through the UNOLS scheduling link.

# Facts about UNOLS

- 1. UNOLS is consortium of Universities with an ongoing interest in Oceanography.
- 2. It serves in an ADVISORY capacity to the Federal Agencies.
- 3. Ships that are subject to scheduling via the UNOLS process have been accepted by the Oceanographic Community through a vote at the Annual Meeting. Ships must meet safety and size requirements.
- 4. Ships not in the U.S. Academic Fleet may be funded by individual science programs, provided they meet safety requirements.
- 5. UNOLS is an OFFICE. It does not award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements. It operates under an award administered by NSF, with additional funding coming from other Federal agencies that use the academic fleet ships, i.e. ONR, NOAA, USCG, USGS, etc.
- 6. UNOLS has subcommittees such as Fleet Improvement, Scheduling, Arctic Icebreaking Coordinating Committee, Research Vessels Operators Council, Technical Enhancements committee, Marcus Langseth Science oversight committee, etc. that provide community advice to the UNOLS council, which then distributes it through the Website. This is an open web site and can be accessed by the Federal agencies and the community.

# NSF SHIP OPERATIONS AND RELATED PROGRAMS

- Ship Operations Program
- Technical Services Program
- Deep Submergence Program
- Oceanographic Instrumentation
- Shipboard Scientific Support Equipment
- Ship Inspection Program
- Ship Acquisition and Upgrades

# Designation of Ships as Oceanographic Research Vessels

- The ships in the academic fleet are owned by three separate entities:
  - A. 10 ships are owned by academic institutions or not for profit oceanographic institutions.
  - B. NSF owns 7 ships.
  - C. The Navy owns 6 ships.
- Most of the academic ships are small or regional class ships.
- NSF ships are regional and intermediate sized.
- Navy owns the vessels essentially larger than 250 ft. long.

- Designation by the USCG as an Oceanographic Research Vessel carries with it implications for use and designation of people aboard the ship.
- It exempts the ships from regulations that would apply if you were carrying passengers.
- ORVs have crew and scientists, scientists are exempt from filing claims as seamen. ORVs carry no passengers or cargo. Rules for operating an ORV are incorporated into the CFR, Title 46, Subchapter U. The ships must carry out oceanographic research or education to keep their designation, with education being secondary to research.



- Ship operations program
- NSF is the primary funding agency for all Oceanographic Research. We support 60-70% of all academic research cruises.
- Cooperative agreements are solicited every 5 years and are peer-reviewed.
- Annual reports, in the form of a proposal, are submitted every year for review before additional funds are allocated. The amount of the increment is based on the number of days in service to support NSF-funded research programs.

# Cooperative Agreement

- Cooperative agreements are reviewed before they are reissued to ensure that all applicable laws and regulations regarding the operation of ships are included.
- These are special conditions put into the cooperative agreements which are specific to operating ships.



- There are special reporting requirements beyond the annual report.
- These are related to any incidents that involve injuries to people aboard the ship,
- Damage to the ship, or
- Conditions that can affect the ship schedule, such as mechanical, electrical, etc. failures that would prevent the ship from completing a mission or delaying another mission.
- In addition, the program manager can ask for *ad hoc* reports from any institution or ship at any time.