

SPRING
2011

CORE DISCOVERIES

The Newsletter for
US Scientific Ocean Drilling

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The Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) is an international research program dedicated to advancing scientific understanding of the Earth through drilling, coring, and monitoring the seafloor. The U.S. Science Support Program (USSSP) supports the involvement of the U.S. scientific community in IODP and is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The *JOIDES Resolution* is a scientific research vessel managed by the U.S. Implementing Organization of IODP (USIO). Together, Texas A&M University, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University, and the Consortium for Ocean Leadership comprise the USIO. IODP is supported by two lead agencies: the U.S. NSF and Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (JAMSTEC). Additional program support comes from the European Consortium for Ocean Research Drilling (ECORD), the Australian-New Zealand IODP Consortium (ANZIC), India's Ministry of Earth Sciences, the People's Republic of China (Ministry of Science and Technology), and the Korea Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources.

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For more information about IODP, visit: www.iodp.org

For more information about the USIO and USSSP, visit:
www.oceanleadership.org/programs-and-partnerships/



UPCOMING EVENTS/ MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS

Offshore Technology Conference

May 2-5, 2011

Houston, Texas

<http://www.otcnet.org/2011/>

Japan Geoscience Union

May 22-27, 2011

Tokyo, Japan

http://www.jpogu.org/meeting_e/index.htm

U.S. Advisory Committee for Scientific Ocean Drilling (USAC) Meeting

July 19-21, 2011

Washington, DC

<http://www.oceanleadership.org/programs-and-partnerships/ussp/advisory-committees/>

Using Ocean Drilling to Unlock the Secrets of Slow Slip Events

August 1-5, 2011

Gisborne, New Zealand

<http://www.gns.cri.nz/slowslip/>

Upcoming SAS Meetings*

Science Advisory Structure Executive Committee (SASEC)

June 14-16, 2011

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Environmental Protection and Safety Panel (EPSP)

June 1-3, 2011

Edinburgh, United Kingdom

**A new Science Advisory Structure (SAS) will begin in October 2011. Ocean Leadership is seeking new members for the SAS panels, and for the U.S. Advisory Committee for Scientific Ocean Drilling (USAC). We strongly encourage the involvement of early career scientists, as well as others with more experience. The nomination deadline is June 15, 2011. For more information, please visit <http://www.oceanleadership.org/ussp>.*

EXPEDITION UPDATES

Costa Rica Calling

For her last two expeditions, the *JOIDES Resolution* has been working near the coast of Costa Rica. From March 15-April 13, the ship was drilling near the Osa Peninsula during the Costa Rica Seismogenesis Project (CRISP) Expedition. Led by co-chief scientists Paola Vannucchi (University of Florence, Italy) and Kohtaro Ujiie (University of Tsukuba, Japan), the CRISP Expedition aims to understand the processes that control the triggering of large earthquakes at convergent margins, where nearly 80% of the earthquakes greater than magnitude 8 occur across the globe. The expedition research focuses on the properties of the *erosional* end member of convergent margins (as opposed to accretionary margins, which are being studied in the Nankai Trough Seismogenic Zone Experiment). Characterized by a relatively thin sediment cover on the basement, fast convergence rate, abundant seismicity, and a change in subducting plate relief along strike, the CRISP region offers excellent opportunities to learn more about the causes of earthquake nucleation and rupture propagation. During four weeks at sea, the science party and crew successfully drilled two sites, recovering sediment and basement core from both the overlying Caribbean Plate and the subducting Cocos Plate. Samples recovered from this expedition will allow researchers to establish the boundary conditions of the Costa Rica erosive subduction system and initial results will be available in the Preliminary Report this summer.



Photo courtesy of IODP-USIO

Photo courtesy of C. Moyer



Chikyu Survives Tsunami

On March 11, 2011, the Japanese drilling vessel *Chikyu* was docked in the port of Hachinohe on the northern Pacific coast of Japan, approximately 250 km north of Sendai. The staff and crew were preparing for IODP Expedition 337 Shimokita Coal Bed Biosphere, scheduled to begin the following week, and a group of 52 elementary school students and teachers were touring the ship. On board, no one felt the magnitude 9.0 Tohoku Earthquake that rocked much of northeastern Japan that afternoon, but they all heard the tsunami warning sirens blaring immediately afterward.

The initial warnings predicted only a 2-m tsunami for Hachinohe, and the *Chikyu* thus remained at the dock as the first wave entered the harbor. Subsequent warnings, however, predicted an 8-m tsunami, and the *Chikyu* maneuvered quickly away from the dock and out into the harbor before the larger wave hit. Despite these actions, the *Chikyu* could not evade the powerful surge of the tsunami, which spilled over the protective breakwater and pushed her back toward the dock. When she collided with the dock, one of her six thrusters broke off and dropped to the harbor floor. The surge then pushed the *Chikyu* back into the harbor where she managed to ride out the rest of the tsunami and avoid further damage.

Fortunately, all of the staff, crew, and visitors survived the disaster without harm. In the aftermath, the *Chikyu* remained in Hachinohe for several days while the crew untangled her anchor chains, evaluated her seaworthiness, and waited for clearance to change ports. The broken thruster was also salvaged. She then cruised north to the port of Muroran on Hokkaido, where she underwent preliminary damage assessment. The *Chikyu* later received clearance to cruise south to Yokohama, where she entered dry dock in mid-April for complete damage assessment and repairs. Pending that assessment, IODP Expedition 337 has been postponed indefinitely. For the latest update on the *Chikyu*, visit www.jamstec.go.jp/chikyu/eng/news/20110311eq.html.

EDUCATION & DIVERSITY NEWS

Engaging the Next Generation in Scientific Ocean Drilling

In late March, 41 national and international participants meet in College Station, Texas for the “Engaging Early Career Scientists in Future Scientific Ocean Drilling” workshop. Workshop participants explored new and multidisciplinary approaches to studying Earth’s systems through scientific ocean drilling and discussed and provided feedback on the themes highlighted in the post-2013 science plan.

A new ocean drilling program provides the opportunity to energize the next generation of scientists interested in using this powerful tool to obtain unique insight into understanding and predicting Earth’s dynamic system and its impacts. A new program also opens scientific ocean drilling to communities that traditionally have

not been part of the program. With a new 10-year plan, the drilling community has a responsibility to foster the involvement of early career scientists. Given that many of the scientists currently active in the decision-making processes of IODP are relatively senior, the ultimate goal is to encourage leadership for scientific ocean drilling by a new cohort. With this motivation, the workshop was designed to introduce all aspects of IODP to a new generation of potential participants, provide input from early career scientists to the final version of the new science plan, and foster the development of contacts, collaborations, and associations that enable future applications of ocean drilling technology. The workshop report will be posted on the USSSP website.

Making a Difference: USIO Diversity Initiatives

In response to the need to enhance diversity in the U.S. earth science research community, the U.S. Implementing Organization (USIO) established its first diversity initiative in 2005, named the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Fellowship. This was initially designed to provide a mechanism for HBCU students to pursue studies in earth systems science (or complementary fields) and/or to explore a broad range of careers in scientific ocean drilling and science program management. This initiative was expanded last summer to include periodic opportunities to sail onboard the *JOIDES Resolution*. To date, nine fellowships (including one on the *JOIDES Resolution*) have been awarded to undergraduate and graduate students with majors in science, engineering, education or communications from five different HBCUs.

The HBCU Educator at Sea is the USIO’s second diversity initiative. Established in partnership with Deep Earth Academy in 2009, this initiative enables an educator from a science or education department at an HBCU to gain firsthand experience at sea as part of on an IODP expedition. Participants will be able to introduce IODP as well as careers in scientific ocean drilling to their colleagues, teachers and students (particularly at minority-serving institutions), and will learn to translate



Photo courtesy of IODP-USIO

scientific results into useful teaching resources. The first HBCU Educator at Sea sailed in September 2009.

Both initiatives have shown promising results; however, the reality is that not all minority groups are represented in the HBCU student population. With this in mind, the USIO has developed a 10-12 week internship to expose an even broader range of minority students from any U.S. college or university to careers in scientific ocean drilling and opportunities within IODP and science program management. The USIO is excited to announce that its first USIO Diversity Internship will be in science communications and will begin this summer. For more information about the USIO’s diversity initiatives, visit www.oceanleadership.org/education/diversity/.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

In Search of Microbes from the Deep Subsurface Biosphere

by Craig L. Moyer and Sean M. McAllister, Western Washington University

The largest reservoir of microbial biomass on Earth is thought to be the deep subsurface, including both terrestrial and marine habitats. Unfortunately, the biodiversity of this ecosystem—the foundation for studying the more complex interactions of these microbial communities *within* the deep subsurface and *between* the deep subsurface and communities at the surface—is also the least well-understood and explored on the planet. This is in large part due to the costs of sample collection and the limitations of sampling the deep subsurface without contamination. In recent years, however, with strong collaboration and improved drilling technologies, some of the mysteries of the deep subsurface biosphere are beginning to come to light.

The biological diversity of the deep sea, even at the seafloor, has only been thoroughly explored within the last two decades. Hydrothermal vents and cold seeps such as mud volcanoes are of particular interest as they are formed by systems of charged fluids derived and circulated at depth. Without scientific ocean drilling (through ODP and IODP), sampling of vent effluent and push coring the top meter of sediment are the only windows into the subsurface biosphere. Fortunately, drilling has allowed the simultaneous collection of uncontaminated microbial communities and associated stratigraphy, petrology, geochemistry, and physical property data. The ability to associate microbial communities with detailed metadata will allow us to better understand microbial biogeography, nutrient cycling, and metabolic strategies.

Cell counts, contamination testing, and limited microbiological experiments are run on every IODP cruise. However, until recently, there have been no microbiology-focused expeditions. With IODP Expeditions 329 and 331 to the South Pacific Gyre and Iheya North hydrothermal vent fields, respectively, several microbiologists collaborating on multiple cultivation-dependent isolation studies and cultivation-independent molecular studies have been able to focus drilling on multiple biologically-relevant sites.

On the Deep Hot Biosphere Expedition (IODP Exp. 331), for example, sampling was conducted along a transect of the Iheya North hydrothermal system from recharge zone to vent. This transect encompassed many of the aspects of a hydrothermal system, and may lend insight into the composition and interaction of the deep subsurface biosphere. Since this expedition was completed within the last year, samples are still in the process of being analyzed. Onboard the *Chikyu*, however, we were able to conduct several successful enrichments of putative iron-oxidizing Bacteria (FeOB), potentially including the *Zetaproteobacteria* (see epifluorescent micrograph and inoculation plate). These FeOB were found at depth in the oxidized layer of the recharge zone (~27 mbsf) and in oxidized layers closer to the main venting site (~0.5 to 9 mbsf). Comparisons of these FeOB with those found at and below the surface at other hydrothermal sites around the world are currently under way.



Advances in IODP ocean drilling technologies will ultimately allow improved, less contaminated sampling at finer scales, allowing for more detailed studies of deep subsurface microbial communities. There is a huge expanse of unexplored habitats and environmental niches in the marine deep subsurface, with an equivalent amount of unexplored microbial novelty. Future microbiology-focused IODP expeditions, in addition to pending results from concluded expeditions, will allow us to explain a small part of this large microbial reservoir.

LETTER FROM THE USAC CHAIR

Dear Colleagues,

As emphasized in the article on page 8, community input is vital to the new drilling program. The new Science Plan outlines where we want to go. Drilling proposals provide the road map to achieve our goals. The scientific community should begin proposing ideas in all disciplines for future scientific drilling. The new IODP, if approved, will continue immediately after the end of the existing program. Scientifically, it is excellent news that there will not be a lengthy hiatus; however, this means that as a community we must continue to submit competitive, outstanding proposals for the new program. It is important to have enough science to not only fill the schedule, but also to optimize ship tracks.

The next deadline for drilling proposals will be October 1, 2011. In addition to writing new proposals, I encourage you to volunteer to serve on the new Science Advisory Structure (SAS) and the U.S. Advisory Committee for Scientific Ocean Drilling (USAC). The U.S. Science Support Program will soon issue a call for new SAS and USAC participants.

Best regards,

Liz Screaton

Chair, U.S. Advisory Committee
for Scientific Ocean Drilling



Special Note on the Japan Earthquake

It has been difficult to grasp the size and devastation of the M9.0 Tohoku Earthquake and resulting tsunami, and our thoughts are with those who suffered losses in and following that event. Although the damage to the *Chikyu* is unfortunate (please see the article on page 3), the quick action of the crew saved lives and prevented greater damage. We are grateful for their professionalism and technical expertise under the most challenging of circumstances. Large natural disasters are extremely humbling for geologists, even while they inspire us to work towards a better understanding of the Earth's processes.

USAC MEMBERS

Liz Screaton (Chair)

University of Florida

Gary Acton

University of California, Davis

Beth Christensen

Adelphi University

Gerald Dickens

Rice University

Anthony Koppers

Oregon State University

Jon Lewis

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Mitch Lyle

Texas A&M University

Heath Mills

Texas A&M University

J. Casey Moore

University of California, Santa Cruz

Craig Moyer

Western Washington University

Stephen Pekar

Queens College

Susanne Straub

Columbia University



Photo courtesy of IODP-USIO

DRILL BITS

IODP Featured at AAAS Annual Meeting

In February, IODP was prominently featured at the 2011 American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. The AAAS Annual Meeting is attended by thousands of scientists, engineers, policymakers, educators, and journalists from over 50 nations to discuss recent discoveries and looming scientific challenges. This year's meeting theme — Science Without Borders — showcased successful international collaborations, like IODP, that take multidisciplinary approaches to problem solving with a global suite of investigators. Scientists and staff working with IODP discussed their research and experiences with the program in three sessions focused on international partnerships, sea-level change research, and publications, and during AAAS's Family Science Days with hands-on activities and a ship-to-shore call. Thanks to Elizabeth Screatton, Gregory Mountain, Craig Fulthorpe, Alexander (Sandy) Tudhope, Deborah Partain, Deep Earth Academy, and the crew of the *JOIDES Resolution* for discussing the program with AAAS audiences!

Geoscientists Discuss Carbon Capture and Sequestration in Oman

In early January, a group of 70 researchers and engineers representing 20 countries convened in Muscat, Oman to discuss carbon capture and sequestration during the Geological Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) in Mafic and Ultramafic Rocks Workshop sponsored in part by NSF, IODP, and Ocean Leadership. Over the course of three days, workshop participants attended talks on carbonation reaction kinetics, seafloor hydrogeology, monitoring and verification of CO₂ storage, and ongoing pilot projects for carbon sequestration in the U.S. and Iceland. In the evenings, participants presented and discussed posters on their research, which focused on different aspects of CCS, ranging from field studies of carbonate precipitation in ultramafic environments to laboratory and modeling studies of CCS-type reactions. Throughout the meeting, all participants engaged in working group discussions, where groups identified areas of needed research and ideal characteristics for CCS sites in the submarine and terrestrial environments. Following the meeting, many of the participants spent two days in the field learning about the Samail ophiolite, where natural processes of CCS are observed in the environment. Led by Peter Kelemen (LDEO), the group explored travertine springs and outcrops of fully-carbonated peridotites known as listwanite. For more information on the workshop, visit <http://ccs-oman2011.org/>.



CCS workshop participants in Oman.

IODP Researchers Participate in Congressional Visits Days

Each year, there are two events dedicated to facilitating scientists' visits to congressional staff on Capitol Hill to help raise awareness about the value of scientific research and science education. These events are the Science Engineering and Technology Congressional Visits Days (SET-CVD) in April and the Geosciences Congressional Visits Days (GEO-CVD) in October. This spring, Donna Blackman (Scripps Institute for Oceanography/UCSD), Barbara John (University of Wyoming), and Heath Mills (Texas A&M University) participated in the sixteenth annual SET-CVD, which took place on April 6-7. The group spent the first day attending geoscience-specific training held at AGU headquarters, where they were briefed on communicating with policymakers, congressional processes, the status of geoscience funding and life on the Hill. At an afternoon seminar, all SET-CVD participants were briefed on the President's budget request for science and engineering programs and agencies. The following day, participants were grouped by state and met with members of Congress and their staff. Approximately 250 scientists and engineers participated in this year's SET-CVD event.

Writing a Science Plan for the New IODP

by Susan Humphris, Andrew Fisher, Demian Saffer, Peter deMenocal and Katrina Edwards

As most readers of this newsletter are aware, the community is in the final stages of editing a science plan for the new International Ocean Discovery Program, the successor to the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program. In this update, we provide you with a glimpse into the preparation of a new science plan and the research themes that are highlighted.



Photo courtesy of IODP-USIO

The initial draft of the new science plan was crafted by a Science Plan Writing Committee (SPWC) composed of 14 members selected by the Science Advisory Structure Executive Committee (SASEC), following an international nomination process. Final approval of SPWC membership was given by the International Working Group Plus (IWG+), a team charged with framing a multinational program architecture. IWG+ consists of representatives from both current and potential IODP participating countries/organizations and from science planning groups. Presentations and white papers that were prepared for the INVEST meeting held in Bremen in September 2009 created the critical foundation for the new science plan, and additional guidance was provided by IWG+ and IODP member representatives as the initial draft was assembled.

The initial draft was made available in summer 2010 for community comment. After several stages of revision, a near final version was posted for comment early in 2011 while also being circulated to an international panel of senior leaders in earth and biological science for independent review. We expect the science plan to be published by late May to early June, after which it will go through high-level review by national and international panels of distinguished non-experts. Throughout the revision process, IODP has had the help of a science writer – Ellen Kappel from Geo Prose (many of you probably remember her from ODP days) – in the design and development of the document to gear it towards the appropriate audiences.

The science plan highlights several new research frontiers that require ocean drilling, posed as a series of challenges met with drilling and research strategies. It emphasizes innovative, transformative, and high-risk/high-reward topics, many of which hold direct relevance to pressing societal issues, including climate change, ocean acidification, deep life, and geohazards. It also proposes heightened efforts in public outreach and education to several constituencies. While recognizing the innate inter-disciplinary nature of drilling-related science, the science plan describes four major areas of future research, including collaborations with other international programs:

- Climate and Ocean Change: Reading the Past, Informing the Future
- Biosphere Frontiers: Deep Life, Biodiversity, and Environmental Forcing of Ecosystems
- Earth Connections: Deep Processes and Their Impact on Earth's Surface Environment
- Earth in Motion: Processes and Hazards on Human Time Scales.

The science plan is written to be competitive and compelling as it moves through high-level programmatic review. While it breaks new ground both scientifically and technically, the new program will continue to be guided by its fundamental philosophy: the best science will find a place on the drilling schedule. The program will be open to new ideas, new questions, and new experiments over its lifetime. Community input has been essential during the draft and revision process, and will continue to be important as the new drilling program moves from vision to implementation.

We will keep you updated on our activities over the next year, and welcome your help, input, and ideas on how to spread the word and galvanize the scientific community towards ensuring the future of scientific ocean drilling beyond 2013!

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

LISA TAUXE

At the age of 24, Lisa Tauxe boarded the *Glomar Challenger*, joining the science party of Deep Sea Drilling Program Leg 73 to explore paleoenvironments of the South Atlantic Ocean. It was the first of three scientific ocean drilling expeditions for Tauxe, who is now a professor at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

Tauxe's expertise in paleomagnetism has taken her to some of the most remote parts of the planet. At sea, she runs the

magnetometer to examine high-resolution records of the geomagnetic field preserved in cores such as the sediments recovered from near the coast of Antarctica.

On land, she is engaged in multiple research projects ranging from deciphering the records of geomagnetic field intensity at archaeological sites in Israel and Jordan to exploring lava flows

from the last five million years at the world's northernmost and southernmost volcanoes.

When asked how the field has changed, Tauxe laughed and remarked, "until recently, paleomagnetism has always been a 'helper' field as far as ocean drilling was concerned, assisting in building time scales and fortifying other people's science. But now, there is tremendous opportunity for further understanding the geomagnetic field itself... we are just beginning to obtain the data and samples we need to understand better what controls its behavior and this is very exciting."

At Scripps, Tauxe mentors graduate students and postdoctoral fellows and teaches earth science courses. She has participated in the drilling program in multiple capacities including serving on science advisory panels. She hopes to board the *JOIDES Resolution* again soon to continue investigating Earth's geomagnetic field.



Photo courtesy of L. Tauxe

LETTER FROM THE NSF

Dear Colleagues,

IODP is an intricate program in which international collaboration is critical to success. This is why representatives from the global research community and funding agencies have been working hard towards promoting scientific ocean drilling beyond 2013. Since our Fall 2010 letter, activities in this area have largely been concluded, with the drafting and signing of Memoranda of Understanding among the 24 international partners and their funding agencies remaining to be completed.

At NSF, we are focused on gaining approval for a new program by the NSF Director, Assistant Director, Division Director for Ocean Sciences, and the National Science Board (NSB). The proposed new program will undergo programmatic and financial review by an independent high-level group, which will then make a recommendation to OCE. If successful, we expect to submit an action item to the NSB in August 2012.

Amidst these plans for a new program, there have been significant recent personnel changes within NSF. We have a new Director, Dr. Subra Suresh, formerly Dean of the School of Engineering at MIT. Last July, we welcomed the new Division Director of OCE, Dr. David Conover, who was previously Dean of the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at SUNY Stony Brook. In addition, Dr. Thomas Janecek joined us last September as an ODP Program Manager.

In March, we introduced Dr. Conover to the *JOIDES Resolution* during a site visit in Costa Rica. We continue to promote the success of IODP within and beyond NSF and view this as an important aspect of the renewal process. The continuation of scientific ocean drilling relies on support from the community and we look forward to working with you through the important milestones ahead.

Sincerely,

The NSF Team

(Rodey Batiza, Jamie Allan, Ian Ridley,
Tom Janecek, and Sarah Menassian)



Photo courtesy of IODP-USIO



From the rig floors of the drilling platforms to the desks of member offices worldwide, IODP is a dynamic yet complicated program. This section is designed to explain the “ins and outs” of different aspects of IODP and in each issue, we will select one or two topics to highlight – we invite you to test your IODP knowledge and to learn something new about the program.

Accessing the Archives

With over 300 kilometers of core stored at repositories in Texas, Germany, and Japan, the task of requesting samples from the ocean drilling programs can seem overwhelming. The best place to start is IODP’s single-access website, www.iodp.org/access-data/, which contains links to the sample request forms and databases to help you search online data archives and information about microbiology sample availability.

The Scientific Earth Drilling Information System (SEDIS) allows you to search for data and information based on geography, expeditions, analytical methods, and a variety of other keywords. It’s a great way to look up which expeditions collected samples you might be interested in analyzing, learn which data sets already exist in your field of interest, and to find relevant publications. Some of the data sets, publications, and photos you may need are available online and SEDIS will provide you with the appropriate links.

After you’ve learned about the relevant and available datasets and expeditions, you might decide to request samples collected by IODP, ODP, or DSDP. Samples are available free of charge, with a few restrictions (such as a one year moratorium period after the expedition or shore-based sampling) and a few obligations (laid out in the IODP Sample, Data, and Obligations Policy at www.iodp.org/program-policies/).

To request samples, it is necessary to determine the exact core you would like to sample. You will need information including the expedition or leg number, the interval, and total number and size of samples you will need. Samples from recent expeditions can be requested through the Sample Material Curation System (SMCS, <http://smcs.iodp.org>), while samples from expeditions and legs prior to Expedition 314 should be made through this site <http://iodp.tamu.edu/curation/samples.html>.

Links to SMCS, SEDIS, core photos, curator contact information, and more are available at the IODP data access website: www.iodp.org/access-data/.





LETTER FROM THE USIO

Dear Colleagues,

As the lead entity for operations of the *JOIDES Resolution*, USIO-TAMU is committed improving operation efficiency in wide-impact areas by conducting robust assessments of existing programs and initiatives. To this end, USIO-TAMU recently instituted a project portfolio management program (PPM) to minimize ad hoc approaches to project investment decision making and re-focus limited resources on the program's highest priorities. The PPM program provides TAMU's management team with a strategic view of projects so they can identify redundancies, apply resources appropriately and keep track of progress. Last November, TAMU began taking steps to achieve three primary goals: optimize resource allocation through an iterative prioritization process; ensure that its portfolio is aligned with IODP strategic program objectives; and adopt project management best practices.

The PPM program is spearheaded by TAMU's Issues Management Team, which includes a cross-functional mix of managers, supervisors and staff scientists and meets bi-monthly (or as required) to review, categorize, score, and prioritize new projects. A project scoring template enables the team to understand overall project significance by focusing on four questions: (1) What is the overall impact to the science community? (2) Does this project fix a current problem? (3) What end-users will be impacted? (4) What is the impact to science operations afloat and ashore? The group assigns a score to each question, which is derived from a list of four or five possible weighted answers. For example, a project with a "high" impact to the science community would address recommendations from a formal external evaluation, panel and workshop recommendations, and/or contractual obligations. Projects



Brad Clement
Director, Science Services



Jim Rosser
*Manager of Development,
IT & Databases*

are prioritized by total score. The top ten projects are then scoped, scheduled, and assigned to project managers. Over time, the portfolio list is adjusted as new projects are introduced and other factors change.

TAMU is committed to working on the right projects for the scientific community and ensuring that these projects are completed successfully. Most recently, TAMU leadership formally chartered two project teams to tackle its top two projects: develop a LIMS database web query application called "LIMS Reports" and improve the DESCLogik core description software. The estimated completion date for both projects is September 1, 2011.

Over the next year, TAMU will continue to aggressively tackle its list of over 70 projects, implement project management best practices, and partner with Texas A&M University's Project Management Office on a commercial PPM software pilot, which should enhance USIO-TAMU's evolving PPM program.

Best regards,

Brad Clement & Jim Rosser
USIO/Texas A&M University



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IODP Expedition Schedule

Expedition	#	Port of Origin	Dates
<i>JOIDES Resolution</i>			
Superfast Spreading Rate Crust 4	335	Puntarenas, Costa Rica	13 Apr. – 3 June, 2011
Tie-Up			3 June – 16 Sept., 2011
Mid-Atlantic Ridge Microbiology	336	Bridgetown, Barbados	16-Sept. – 17 Nov. 2011
Mediterranean Outflow	339	Ponta Delgada, Azores	17 Nov. – 17 Jan., 2012
Lesser Antilles Volcanism & Landslides	340	Lisbon, Portugal	17 Jan. – 18 Mar., 2012
Tie-Up			18 Mar. – 15 July, 2012
Southern Alaska Margin Tectonics, Climate & Sedimentation	341	Victoria, Canada	15 July – 14 Sept., 2012
<i>Chikyu</i>			
NanTroSEIZE Plate Boundary Deep Riser - 2	333	TBD	June – Dec., 2012*

Please see <http://iodp.tamu.edu/scienceops/> and www.iodp.org/expeditions/ for the most updated ship operations schedules.

*dates subject to change



Photo courtesy of IODP-USIO