

Letter from the JRFB Chair – November 2018

Dear Scientific Ocean Drilling Friends,

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Chair of the *JOIDES Resolution* Facility Board (JRFB), having taken over from Anthony Koppers on 1 October 2018. We as a community owe Anthony a huge “thank you” for guiding and growing our program so diligently over the last three years. We also owe Brad Clement and his *JOIDES Resolution* Science Operator (JRSO) team at Texas A&M similar kudos because the combination of the JRSO and JRFB management has made the U.S. part of the International Ocean Discovery Program much more efficient and hugely successful.

Anthony will be a tough act to follow! Therefore, it is with some trepidation that I have accepted the position of JRFB Chair and I plan to continue the excellent working relationship among the JRFB, JRSO, NSF, and the science support structure—the Science Evaluation Panel (SEP), the Environmental Protection and Safety Panel (EPSP), and the Science Support Office (SSO). Above all, my position is one of service to the community, so please feel free to contact me with any questions/concerns you may have about the JRFB and IODP and I will do my best to find answers for you.

We should hear early next year from the National Science Board about the renewal of the JR facility. We are all hoping for a positive response, especially given the efficient management of the facility and the science return on the NSF investment. You may also have heard that the JR experienced some mechanical difficulties this year that resulted in the curtailment of one expedition and the postponement of others. These events clearly demonstrate that the JR is aging. Please note that as chair of the JRFB, I am acutely aware of the situation and have been in close contact with the JRSO to keep up to date with the latest developments, but also to discuss options for the future of the U.S. IODP drilling vessel.

Finally, you will note from the schedule shown at iodp.org, the JR is now scheduled until 6 June 2021 and at the next JRFB we will schedule the ship into 2022. The International Ocean Discovery Program will end in 2023, so now is the time when we also need to start preparing for the next phase of scientific ocean drilling. It is vital that we maintain good proposal pressure at the SEP to demonstrate to national agencies and decision makers that the program is vibrant. I believe that our community should be optimistically looking to the future, and I urge you to think positively about getting new proposal ideas that follow or even dictate the ship track (shown on page 11 of this issue of *Ocean Discovery*). Therefore, I ask you to think about two very important questions:

- For IODP beyond 2023, do we need a new science plan?
- Why do we need more core/data from our oceans?

The IODP Town Hall at the AGU meeting will be held on Wednesday night, December 12, at the Washington Plaza Hotel and I strongly urge you to attend that event. I believe we are on the

clasp of something special for the drilling program, but it will require hard work, cooperation, and your participation.

I am sincerely yours,

Clive R. Neal
Chair, *JOIDES Resolution* Facility Board