

UNOLS – Meeting the Crewing Challenge

IRSO 2023 Meeting

Doug Russell

UNOLS Executive Secretary

doug@unols.org





- **The Crewing Challenge**

- Retention – losing crew during COVID and has continued since
 - Aging out
 - Quarantine/Isolation
 - More money
- Recruiting – competing in a shrinking maritime labor market
 - Particularly difficult to recruit licensed engineers

- **Initial Action** – with encouragement & full support of our funding agencies

- Created a Crewing Tiger Team with representatives from across our operators and fleet
 - Developed list of 7 recommendations to address the challenges



• Actions taken

- Hired a full time UNOLS Crewing Support Manager
- Funding agency support for pay increases & recruiting bonuses
- Inserted time during major port calls for crew and ship's business
- Allowance for ship operator retention efforts – bunk for cadets/trainees/recruiting, underway time for local outreach
- Outreach, outreach, outreach
 - Visits to ship operators / meet with crews to understand concerns, needs, desires
 - Visits to maritime academies
 - Visits to training schools, maritime high schools
 - Develop / upgrade outreach materials
 - Increased social media presence
- Developed standardized "UNOLS Job Board" for simplified application for employment to open fleet positions with weekly updates
- Developed crew recruiting video –
<https://vimeo.com/821819885/4ecf865893?share=copy>



Results

- Academic Research Fleet Crewing Metric:
 - In November 2022, for 16 of the 18 vessels, there were 71 positions identified to be open within 6 months
 - As of this week, for 16 of the 17 vessels, there are approximately 50 positions identified to be open within 11 months
 - That's a 30% reduction



Other UNOLS updates

- Marine Facilities Planning
 - Science Requests, Scheduling, Crew Planning, Reporting (more to come)
 - Still to come... crew planning, science equipment inventory management
- Regional Class Research Vessel project status
 - See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkHNvtOHMDM> for R/V Taani launch video
- R/V *Marcus G. Langseth* Replacement
- UNOLS community international participation
 - IRSO
 - ERVO
 - INMARTECH