Terms of Reference
Research Vessel Support for Ocean Sciences

Objective: This study will examine the current infrastructure support (research vessels) for academic oceanography supported by the Office of Naval Research in the context of a broader-based infrastructure called University National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS).

Background: Navy has historically supported ocean sciences in academic research institutions through grants and infrastructure in the form of oceanographic ships. A total of eleven ships have been provided from SCN (Ship Construction Navy) funds since the early 1960's. Of these vessels, five remain in service and are joined by a newer ship funded by direct Congressional action.   Since the last SCN ships were built, much has changed in naval missions and in federal structure for ocean sciences. Today, civilian agencies are playing a larger role in academic support and infrastructure. Do reasons remain for Navy to continue to support infrastructure, as well as science and technology grant support?

Specific Taskings:

The study will specifically consider:

- The current infrastructure support (research vessels) for academic oceanography supported by the Office of Naval Research.

- The role of the UNOLS in providing efficient utilization of federal assets for global oceanographic studies.

- The national context of federal plans for continuation of research vessel infrastructure supporting academic ocean sciences.

- The recent historical, present, and future utilization of the Navy owned vessels and their importance to naval programs, particularly S&T.

- The current planning for the Ocean Class Research Vessel including science mission requirements, hull form selection, and cost estimation.