

**OCEAN OBSERVING CONTRACTS AWARDED TO
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
AND
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON**

Multimillion-dollar contracts will transform understanding of the oceans

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WASHINGTON –Joint Oceanographic Institutions (JOI), a consortium of leading U.S. oceanographic research institutions, has awarded multimillion dollar contracts to the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and the University of Washington (UW) to support the development and operations for the Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI). The OOI is a U.S. National Science Foundation investment to advance scientific understanding of the oceans, transforming research by establishing a network of interactive, globally distributed sensors in the ocean.

JOI President Steve Bohlen said, “Today is an exciting day for ocean science. Awarding these contracts marks the first step in transforming the way ocean science is conducted. Rather than relying on limited expeditions from ships to gather data, observatories in the ocean will allow us to access data from our labs and desktops. Through the OOI, real-time data will be made available to scientists, citizens, teachers, and schoolchildren across the country.”

With National Science Foundation support, identified in the agency’s FY2007 and FY2008 budget, the OOI will construct a networked infrastructure of science-driven sensor systems to measure the physical, chemical, geological and biological variables in the ocean and seafloor. The transformative OOI will provide continuous, interactive access to the ocean for the oceanographic research and education communities. The OOI’s observatory elements will address science questions on coastal, regional, and global scales, linked by a common instrument, infrastructure, and information management system.

The award to UCSD is for the computer architecture or cyberinfrastructure (CI) portion of the OOI. Scripps Institution of Oceanography will lead the project while the UCSD division of the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2) will manage it and, together with Scripps and the San Diego Supercomputer Center (SDSC), will build much of the cyberinfrastructure. The initial 6-year award is for \$29 million, and total funding may reach more than \$42 million over the course of the planned 11-year project.

“Routine, long-term measurement of ocean processes is crucial to continued growth in our understanding and predictive modeling of complex natural phenomena that are highly variable and span enormous scales in space and time,” said John Orcutt, principal

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Mississippi State University

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Old Dominion University

Oregon State University

Pennsylvania State University

Rutgers University

Stanford University

Texas A&M University

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California

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Mississippi

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Woods Hole Oceanographic
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investigator on the CI project and Professor of Geophysics at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego.

University of Washington was awarded the opportunity to begin leading one of the complex parts of the Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI), to construct a cabled underwater research facility off the Oregon and Washington coastlines. The first year phase will focus on detailed engineering specifications to extend high-speed internet throughout the deep oceans. This underwater research facility will be the world's first robot-sensor network to span a tectonic plate.

"Today we are taking an important first step in fulfilling the vision that John Delaney and his many colleagues articulated more than 12 years ago. We are embarked upon a very ambitious project which will transform our understanding of the planet on which we live through a deeper understanding of the oceans. This is science at its grandest, and the University of Washington is an eager participant in this venture," said University of Washington President Emmert.

JOI presented the OOI Network's Conceptual Design, developed with input from the research community, in August 2006. A major focus of UW's contract will advance the conceptual planning documents toward JOI's development of the network's preliminary design and the OOI Network's Preliminary Design Review scheduled for late 2007.

"This new ocean observatory capability will provide novel and enduring ways to study the oceans. These new approaches are going to revolutionize not only how we humans look at oceans and the earth, but eventually – in the time of our children's children – the way we manage our entire planet," commented Professor John Delaney, with the School of Oceanography at University of Washington, Seattle.

Said Dr. Holly Given, program director for Ocean Observing activities at JOI, "signing these contracts is a major step toward realizing the dreams of the hundreds of oceanographers who have been planning the OOI Network for more than ten years. JOI welcomes UCSD and UW as partners in this challenge."

A final award for the coastal and global scale nodes of the OOI is expected in August 2007.

JOI is a consortium of 31 premier oceanographic research institutions that serves the U.S. scientific community through management of large-scale, global research programs in the fields of marine geology and geophysics and oceanography. Known for leadership of U.S. scientific ocean drilling and ocean observing initiatives, JOI has helped facilitate discovery and advance global understanding of the Earth and its oceans through effective systems engineering and program management.

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