

Dear Colleague,

The first meeting of the RIDGE 2000 (R2k) program steering committee (STCOM) was held in Salt Lake City last week, and (in my humble opinion), it was an excellent meeting. The meeting was very interactive, the committee has a very positive attitude towards the program, and we made a lot of progress in decisions on the agenda items. The meeting lasted a day and a half, and we are still transcribing the minutes. However, I wanted to take this opportunity to give you a brief update on the highlights of the meeting. Rather than run through the meeting agenda. I have organized the highlights by topic, so you can jump to your favorite in the attached document:

- 1) Community Education Workshop
- 2) Implementation Plan Workshop
- 3) Time Critical Studies
- 4) Relevancy Review Committee
- 5) Data sharing policies and procedures
- 6) Budget
- 7) Education and Outreach
- 8) Other meetings and Timeline

### **1) Community Education Workshop**

**Status:** Organizing committee: Dan Fornari (EPR lead), Doug Wiens (Lau lead), Russ McDuff (Endeavour lead), Anna-Louise Reysenbach, Carol Chin, Chuck Fisher with a member of the Executive Committee (EXCOM) acting as point person for each site: Dave Christie for Lau, Jim Cowen for Endeavour, and Debbie Smith for the EPR. Approximately 120 people indicated interest in the workshop and 75 have filled out logistics forms. Speaker lists were finalized and the discussion panels rounded out. Some of these people are still being contacted and the full list (as of today) is posted on our web site.

**Speaker charges:** The speakers are charged with providing an overview of work in their field specific to their site and with discussing links to other disciplines. They are also charged with collecting data for their talks from the community. Moreover, they are asked to provide:

- An extended outline of their talk, as soon as it is available to be posted on the ISS portion of the R2k web site
- A reference list
- Any overview figures that currently exist for the site
- Pointers to existing databases
- And, by the time of the meeting or very soon afterward “lecture notes” in a user friendly form.

**Format:** The Committee agreed that short talks with equal time for discussion, led by a diverse discussion panel is best for presentations. Plenty of time (morning and afternoon) will be set aside for posters and more informal discussions. The workshop agenda reflects this.

**Product:** This topic led to discussions of data sharing and R2k data policies that I will return to below. The primary product of this workshop will consist of web pages on the R2k web site for each ISS. These will include the information provided by the speakers, references (as text and Endnote files), and pointers to other web sites. We are beginning to create the ISS pages and plan to update them as we receive input. In addition, each ISS will have its own data web site. We are considering following the model of the Endeavour Observatory site currently under construction by Russ McDuff and others at the University of Washington. Russ will make a presentation on his data management efforts at the Community Education Workshop in Long Beach, CA. Dan Fornari agreed to oversee the establishment of the EPR ISS and Doug Wiens agreed to do the same for the Lau ISS. More information on this to come...

## **2) Implementation Plan Workshop**

**Status:** First of all, thanks to all of you that volunteered to help with this workshop! We discussed forming an organizing committee for the workshop and the lead persons for each site were nominated along with potential committee members. The Committee decided to follow the same general mechanism as the last workshop with a lead person for each site and the same member of the EXCOM acting as point person for each ISS. The folks nominated to take the lead for each site have been contacted and have agreed to help out. They are: Karen Von Damm for the EPR, Debbie Kelley for Endeavour, and Doug Wiens for Lau. They are in the process of forming their own organizing committees (with suggestions from the STCOM). We will post this information as soon as it is available.

**Format:** The organizing committee will decide the details of the format of the workshop, but in general we envision that the meeting will consist of daily plenary sessions with the bulk of each day spent in site-specific groups. These groups will work on the details of site-specific implementation plans that address the key outstanding questions that will lead to a fuller understanding of each site's systems, from "mantle to microbe". The plenary sessions will serve as a vehicle to assure continuity among sites, facilitate comparative studies, as well as help to cross-pollinate ideas and directions.

**Product:** The product of this workshop will be drafts of implementation plans that outline the order and priority of work and experiments that are necessary to reach the goals of the program at each site. After the workshop, these draft plans will be posted on the R2k web site for 2 weeks so that the community will have the opportunity to read and critique the plans before they are finalized. Along with the draft plans, short synopses of the workshop discussions that led to the resulting plan will also be posted. The implementation plans will be used by the relevancy review committee, and should therefore be used in the preparation of grant proposals. We are working towards having these complete in time for the August NSF target date.

## **3) Time Critical Studies.**

Jim Cowen and Dave Butterfield reported on the status of Time Critical Studies (TCS). No water column signature of possible extrusive activity was detected in the most recent event responses to the Jackson Segment of the Gorda Ridge and Middle Valley, north JdF

Ridge. Despite the absence of positive evidence, these responses added valuable insight into the interpretation of remotely detected seismic events and are necessary to planning future responses. One of the SOSUS hydrophones monitoring the NE Pacific is currently not functioning, but the Navy is thinking seriously about repairing this, possibly as early as summer, 2002. In the meantime the effect is a small loss of accuracy in locating the source of specific signals, but this will not significantly affect the ability of a fast response team to conduct a survey after an event, because their search pattern is significantly larger than the potential error in locating the source. It was stressed that further community involvement is needed in Time-Critical Studies, particularly in the area of technologies that facilitate decreased response times. Formation of a sub-committee to oversee the TCS component and keep the community informed of TCS activities and needs was endorsed by the STCOM, and Jim Cowen was asked to chair the Committee. He will form the committee and announce the membership within two weeks. Proposals for the Time Critical Study component of R2k will be accepted at the Feb 15, 2002 and subsequent NSF OCE target dates.

#### **4) Relevancy Review Committee**

The committee accepted the charge of the NSF and the program review panel to have R2k relevancy assessed for all R2k proposals. The STCOM will oversee the formation of Relevancy Review Panels that will meet after each NSF target date and before the NSF panel. The Committee discussed the role of the Relevancy panels and determined that the panel will decide if a proposal is relevant to the R2k program (therefore eligible for R2k funds), and the priority of the proposal for R2k funding. The panel will not advise on the quality of the proposal, thus a low relevancy rating will only “kick” a proposal to the core program (MG&G for example) without prejudice. It was envisioned that a very high R2k priority rating might benefit a proposal at the regular MG&G or BioOce Panels.

#### **5) Data Sharing Policies and Procedures**

This topic resulted in one of the more lively discussions... Two separate items fall into this category.

**A general R2K data policy for ISS studies:** The STCOM generally agreed that the ridge community’s goal is to work together to produce products bigger than those of any individual project, to entrain as many new investigators as possible, and to facilitate interdisciplinary interactions, both planned and unforeseen. Towards this end, the committee agreed that the R2k program should take proactive steps towards sharing of data among investigators. This is an issue that has been discussed extensively among the RIDGE program Endeavour Observatory investigators. They produced a general NSF-RIDGE Endeavour Segment Seafloor Observatory Data Policy that was distributed to the STCOM (and is available for comment on the R2k web site). The STCOM approved of the spirit of this policy and will draft a document on the basis of this policy but generalized for the R2k program (including all ISS sites and the TCS component).

**A policy for ISS grant proposals:** In the spirit of the Community Education Workshop and “leveling the playing field” between investigators, the STCOM discussed a policy of allowing only data in the public domain to be used for ISS proposals. Many obstacles were noted, including (but not limited to) fear of release of data before publication, how to handle data requiring extensive processing, quality control, experimental data not

amenable to databases, and (of course) enforcement. The general consensus of the Committee was that this is a difficult goal, but one we should work towards. The R2k office will draft a position statement for circulation within the STCOM and to then to the community as a whole. This issue will also be discussed at the upcoming Community Education Workshop in a session on Monday night that will include a review of the Endeavour Policy draft. Get ready for a lively discussion!

## **6) Budget**

The R2k budget was reviewed. The Ridge 2000 Office has an annual budget of almost \$600,000, about 10% of the science budget for the program. A little less than half the budget goes to salaries and associated costs (benefits and overhead) for 3 full time persons, and 4 months of Fisher's time. A bit over 1/3 is for meetings (mostly non-overhead participant costs). The rest includes the dues for InterRIDGE, E&O activities and publications, and communications and supplies. The Committee discussed the program philosophy for meeting support, including levels of support for R2k meeting participants, support for InterRIDGE meeting participation, and support for meetings relevant to MOR investigators, but outside of the R2K program. This discussion was in the context of a meeting budget that is already fully committed for this fiscal year as a result of the two very large community meetings that are planned. As a general rule, it was decided that the program should offer significant but not full support to R2k meeting participants that request such, limited support for InterRIDGE meetings (using the same philosophy), and this only after approval on a meeting by meeting basis. It was also recognized that R2k was committed to helping support some incubation meetings for a MAR ISS and Exploratory Studies Work.

## **7) Education and Outreach.**

Liz Goehring (E&O Coordinator) presented an overview of a R2k E&O plan, with plenty of enthusiastic discussion from the STCOM. She outlined goals and identified ways our community can address outreach to the general public, the scientific community, and the education community. Details of this will be forthcoming in a letter from Liz. A few highlights are covered below. An E & O advisory committee was established and almost everyone wanted to serve on it. However, only the Chair was endorsed at the meeting (Debbie Smith), and it will be up to Debbie & Liz to pick the committee (with a few strong suggestions from the STCOM).

**Highlights:** All agreed that one aspect of outreach is to entrain new scientists into the program. Two immediate approaches were discussed, approved and are underway:  
**A "press release":** Dan Fornari prepared a first draft of an announcement for the R2k program and we are working from this to prepare a document for submittal to a wide range of journals, societies, and newsletters. Members of the STCOM volunteered to submit the article (after customizing it for their audience) to numerous outlets including ASM, ASLO, JOI/USSAC newsletter, SICB, Deep-Sea, ACS and Astrobiology newsletters, EOS, GSA Today, Geotimes, Sea Technology, and Oceanography. We are planning on beginning submissions of this within two weeks. **R2k posters for meetings:** All STCOM members volunteered to submit R2k posters to society meetings that they attend. The office will distribute posters to all members of the STCOM for this purpose.

(Note that we are updating a poster that we prepared for the second hydrothermal vent biology meeting last October). If any of you are willing to promote the R2k program at a meeting you are attending, let us know and we'll send you a poster!

In other news... the R2k office is working with the current events kid's show, "**What's in the News**", to highlight RIDGE 2000 science. A short series featuring Karen Von Damm and her EPR cruise is being broadcast to thousands of 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade school kids in over 30 states. If all goes well, we hope to feature future ridge cruises in a more extensive series in the coming school year.

**An Educators Brainstorming Workshop:** A proposal was brought forth to conduct a workshop with teachers –the objective being to let the teachers help us identify what is necessary to effectively bring ridge science into classrooms across the country. Plans for this workshop were approved and funding avenues identified. The workshop will be held this summer. More on this in Liz's letter...

### **8) Other meetings**

**\*\* InterRIDGE Theoretical Institute:** *The Thermal Structure of Oceanic Crust and Dynamics of Hydrothermal Circulation*, September 2002. A proposal requesting \$30,000 from R2k for support of 25 US scientists to attend this institute was received from Jian Lin and Andy Fisher. This amount combined with other funds the organizers have raised would allow full support of US participants for the meeting. The proposal was well received, and the Institute was considered to be very worthwhile and well planned. However, based on the philosophy of partial support for US R2k meetings (and current fiscal constraints), the committee recommended that R2k offer \$25k in support of 25 US meeting participants.

**\*\* InterRIDGE Next Decade Planning meeting:** This meeting is scheduled for June 10-12, 2002, and will be an important meeting as InterRIDGE will plan for the next 10 years. The Committee discussed supporting the participation of 2-3 people from the R2k office and STCOM (3 participants each from full member countries were requested by InterRIDGE). Based on the InterRIDGE announcement of 1/22/02, it is likely that the Committee will receive a proposal for support of US "invited experts", if that seems appropriate.

**\*\* InterRIDGE MOMAR Workshop:** This June 2002 workshop was just announced in the latest issue of InterRIDGE News. Maya Tolstoy was asked to prepare a proposal for support of the participation of US scientists in this workshop, because of its relevance to future MAR ISS incubation studies. The R2k office has received the proposal –it is currently being circulated to the STCOM for comment and action.

**\*\* Exploratory Studies Workshop:** The Committee discussed co-sponsoring a workshop in support of this portion of the science plan that was not approved by the panel or by NSF. This type of activity in support of Exploratory Studies was recommended by both the program review panel and the NSF. The Committee is in favor of holding an Exploratory Studies Workshop and the R2k office was charged with

exploring the co-sponsorship of such a workshop with programs such as OE (NOAA), and CHESS (Sloan foundation) for the fall of 2002.

**\*\*MAR ISS Incubation Workshop:** This is another workshop recommended by the panel and NSF. The Committee is in favor of moving forward on the planning of this workshop as well, and the EXCOM will develop a proposal for such. This workshop is planned for late fall or early winter of this year (in the second fiscal year of the office budget).

**Timeline (through October)**

Boy it's a busy one... The bottom line is I'm not sure how we're going to fit it all in, but we will do our best.

*Important dates to remember:*

- Feb 11–14 ASLO Ocean Science Meeting (visit our R2k booth –the first ever outside of AGU)
- Feb 15 NSF R2k target date: Equipment, TCS, and Postdoc proposals for R2k funds
- Feb 25–28 Community Education workshop
- April 6 R2k Relevancy Review Panel
- April 7–9 Implementation Plan Workshop
- April 17–9 InterRIDGE South West Indian Ridge Workshop
- June 10–12 InterRIDGE Next Decade Workshop, Bremen, Germany
- June 16–18 II MOMAR InterRIDGE Workshop, Horta, Azores, Portugal
- June (late) R2k STCOM meeting
- July Educators Brainstorming Workshop
- July 15 Implementation plans published (drop dead deadline)
- August 15 NSF R2k target date: ISS proposals (and TCS, Equipment and Postdoc)
- Sept 9–13 InterRIDGE Theoretical Institute: *The Thermal Structure of Oceanic Crust and Dynamics of Hydrothermal Circulation, Pavia, Italy.*
- Sept 13-14 InterRIDGE Steering Committee Meeting

Sincerely,

Chuck Fisher (Chair, RIDGE 2000),  
RIDGE 2000 Steering Committee