A Scientific Ocean Drilling Coordination Office for the US Community FY26 Q2 Operations and Management Report

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Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. Management and Administration 3
3. Advisory structure 3
4. Science operations 4
Operations and Engineering 4
Technical Support 4
Science Support 4
Information Technology 4
5. Science Services 5
Communications 5
Workshops and training 5
Workforce Development 5
Outreach 5
Subawards 6
6. SODCO website 6
7. Data services 6
Site Survey Data Bank 6
LogDB 6
8. Financials 6
9. Publications 6
Articles authored by SODCO staff 6
Abstracts authored by SODCO staff 7

1. Introduction

Texas A&M University (TAMU) and Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University (LDEO) collaboratively form the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) Scientific Ocean Drilling Coordination Office (SODCO) to facilitate US Scientific Ocean Drilling (US SciOD) goals. TAMU assists principal investigators with creating drilling proposals; identifies suitable drilling platforms, coring, and logging tools; works with the scientific community to advance new technologies; and plans and implements expeditions. LDEO provides research community support services for successful planning and execution of expeditions, including pre-drilling activities, planning and training workshops, and science communications and outreach. Scripps Institution of Oceanography provides a Site Survey Data Bank (SSDB) for proposal acoustic and related site characterization data.

2. Management and Administration

The SODCO branches at TAMU and LDEO act as a fully integrated team. The SODCO Executive Team comprises the SODCO Director, the Director of Science Operations, and the Director of Science Services:

- SODCO Director (TAMU): provides overall project coordination and supervision of project personnel at TAMU and acts as the interface with other TAMU-provided services (general Information Technology [IT], Publications, Sponsored Research Services [SRS], and Gulf Coast Repository [GCR]).
- Director of Science Operations (TAMU): oversees day-to-day activities of operations, engineering, science, permitting and clearances, and a technical team.
- Director of Science Services (LDEO): manages community science planning, including pre-drilling and training activities; oversees science communications; and supervises the staff at LDEO.

Hiring efforts for SODCO continued with the progress reported below. The Directors at TAMU and LDEO meet weekly to track issues and updates. In addition, the directors meet with the Chair of the SODCO Advisory Board (SAB) on a biweekly basis (see below).

SODCO sent a representative to attend the U.S. Science Support Program (USSSP) sponsored scientific drilling workshops, “Landslide dynamics, ocean currents, and carbon cycling on the southeastern U.S. Atlantic margin” (Austin, TX, 19–21 May 2026) and “Seafloor pockmarks and their role in modulating the release of geologic carbon through glacial cycles-Chatham Rise, New Zealand” (Corpus Christi, TX, 9–10 June 2026). SODCO presented an overview of platform options, technical and laboratory support for expeditions at sea and onshore, assistance provided for drilling proposal development, expected SODCO support for community staffing, anticipated expedition budget responsibilities, and other SODCO supported community activities and opportunities.

3. Advisory structure

The SODCO advisory structure includes the central SAB and a series of working groups, advisory committees, and panels:

- SAB Staffing Subcommittee
- SAB Science Communications Subcommittee
- SAB Workshops Subcommittee
- SAB Science and Technology Subcommittee
- SODCO Safety and Environment Panel (SSEP)

The next SAB Meeting is scheduled for 25–27 August in New York City at the American Museum of Natural History, and an agenda is being finalized.

SODCO issued a call to the science community in early July for new SAB members for the next term. Three current SAB members will be rotating off the board as of 31 October, and three new members will join as of 1 November. The SAB will evaluate applications for new members at the summer SAB Meeting and make recommendations to SODCO.

4. Science operations

Operations and Engineering

The Operations and Engineering group consists of a Supervisor, two Operations Engineers, and one Staff Engineer. This group continues to explore information on vessels, platforms, tools, and other technology that are available on the market. The group's Supervisor meets monthly with counterparts from the European Science Operator (ESO) and the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC).

Members of the Operations and Engineering group and Expedition Project Managers have met with principal investigators of proposals to discuss operational needs, answer questions, and estimate drilling plans.

Technical Support

The Technical Support group comprises a Supervisor, a Senior Technician, a Chemistry Technician, an Electronics Instrumentation Specialist, and a Mobilization and Logistics Coordinator. The Chemistry Technician position was filled in July.

Customized seagoing containers will provide critical instrumentation and support for at-sea data collection, and laboratory facilities at the GCR will be available for shore-based description and measurements. TAMU is in the process of reviewing and finalizing drawings for each container. Container construction is expected to begin in Q3. Electrical hookups and fire extinguisher installation have been completed in preparation for container arrival.

The technical team continued to develop a data management plan for at sea operations. The team is also developing a sample entry application to be used at sea and during the onshore phase of SODCO expeditions.

Science Support

Two Expedition Project Managers (EPMs) make up the Science Support group at TAMU. The EPMs continued to participate in SODCO website requirements and SODCO communications meetings and are developing web content for the full SODCO site. The EPMs are part of the teams meeting with drilling proposal principal investigators.

The EPMs mentored the two SODCO-TAMU interns over 7 weeks this summer.

Information Technology

The TAMU SODCO IT team, consisting of an applications developer and an IT specialist, is actively contributing to internal projects, such as mobile container IT requirements, SODCO and GCR data management, new software development projects, and supporting SODCO onshore IT needs. Members

of the IT and Technical Support teams are meeting with internal groups to flesh out which software applications need to be maintained for SODCO and for the GCR.

5. Science Services

The search committee for the SODCO Science Officer position met in Q2 to review applications, and five applicants were invited for interviews. Interviews will take place early in Q3, and we anticipate hiring to be carried out during the summer of 2026.

Communications

SODCO continued regular communications with the broader science community through biweekly Community Update and dedicated event/opportunity emails, as well as through all social media accounts.

SODCO staff from both TAMU and LDEO held weekly communications meetings to work on the content and design of the new SODCO website and to identify opportunities and priorities for upcoming science communication.

Workshops and training

SODCO issued calls to the science community for two supported activity programs, the Workshops Program and the Innovation Grants Program. During the open call period, SODCO was contacted by a number of PIs to discuss their project and proposal ideas. Four workshop proposals and 14 innovation grants proposals were submitted. These will be reviewed at the summer SAB meeting in August, and funding recommendations will be made by the SAB. SODCO anticipates funding proposals and issuing awards for these programs in Q3.

Organizers of the IODP^3 ECORD Summer School, “Past ocean currents and their effects on sedimentation and benthic ecosystems” (7–18 September, Bremen, Germany), contacted SODCO to discuss the possibility of SODCO providing travel grants to US participants. SODCO agreed to provide grants to two early career researchers to support their participation.

Workforce Development

SODCO-TAMU hosted two interns from 1 June to 17 July. The interns worked with their mentors, technical staff from both SODCO and the GCR, and GCR curation staff to undertake research projects. They presented their results to SODCO and GCR staff members on the final day of the internship and both will be presenting this work at the AGU Fall meeting in December.

SODCO-LDEO supported four interns in the Lamont Summer Internship Program for Undergraduates between 22 May and 6 August. These interns visited the SODCO team at Lamont to talk about their research and meet SODCO and Lamont researchers working on marine geoscience projects. They presented their research results to the Lamont community on 28 July through talks and posters. All four interns have submitted abstracts to present their work at either the GSA or AGU fall meeting.

Outreach

SODCO-LDEO staff met with staff at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) to begin planning for the next year of collaborative activities, which will include SciCafe, a lecture series, and EarthFest 2027.

Subawards

No new subawards were issued during this period.

6. SODCO website

SODCO continued to provide new information about community resources and opportunities on the preliminary SODCO.org website. SODCO staff continued their engagement with C&G Partners on the development work on the full version of the website. LDEO personnel met with C&G Partners and development team to review site needs, organization, content and design.

7. Data services

Site Survey Data Bank

During this quarter, work continued on modernizing the SSDB system. A swap system (in case of local outages) was deployed and tested. Work also progressed on migrating SSDB to the Laravel framework. Laravel is a modern, structured framework for building and maintaining database-driven web applications, with built-in tools for security, database interaction, testing, and workflow management. It also includes features for developing SSDB's database tables, file upload workflow, and metadata entry forms, making them easier to edit and maintain. The Laravel migration is ~20% complete, and SSDB is on track to be ready for data submissions as early as September 1, if needed.

LogDB

Discussions continue with IODP^3 entities (European Petrophysics Consortium and JAMSTEC/MarE3) about the possibility of LogDB handling and serving future IODP^3 expedition logging data.

8. Financials

This quarter, expenses were incurred for the two students chosen as summer interns at TAMU. These participant costs included travel, housing, and stipends. Subaward invoices are being received on time, reviewed, and approved for payment. No additional payments have been made under the mobile laboratory agreement, and none will be made until the second milestone is completed.

9. Publications

Articles and abstracts published during this quarter authored by SODCO staff include the following. Bold type indicates SODCO staff.

Articles authored by SODCO staff

Coenen, J.J., Jimenez-Espejo, F.J., McClymont, E.L., Tangunan, D., Dodd, J., Robinson, R.S., Hall, I.R., Norris, R., Berke, M.A., **LeVay, L.**, Ruiz-Marin, E., and Scherer, R., 2026. Sea-level and frontal controls on diatom deposition during the Mid-Pleistocene transition, southern Cape Basin. Paleoceanography and Paleoclimatology, 41(7):e2025PA005375. https://doi.org/10.1029/2025PA005375

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Paleo-Archive. In Lucchi, R.G., St. John, K.E.K., Ronge, T.A., and the Expedition 403 Scientists, Eastern Fram Strait Paleo-Archive. Proceedings of the International Ocean Discovery Program, 403: College Station, TX (International Ocean Discovery Program). https://doi.org/10.14379/iodp.proc.403.202.2026

Pearman, C., Tien, C.-Y., White, N., Maclennan, J., Murton, B., Gibson, S., Day, J., Parnell-Turner, R., and IODP Expedition 395 Scientists (including **L. LeVay**), 2026. Collapse and resurgence of the Iceland mantle plume. Nature Communications, 17(1):4104. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-026-71618-2

Preine, J., Hübscher, C., Druitt, T., Hartge, M., Metcalfe, A., Kutterolf, S., Pank, K., Karstens, J., Nomikou, P., Tominaga, M., Hooft, E., Hufstetler, B., Autumn, K., Crutchley, G., Jover, M.B., Berndt, C., **Ronge, T.A.**, and IODP Expedition 398 Scientists, 2026. Rift development, tectonic forcings, and magmatic feedbacks at Santorini and Kolumbo volcanoes constrained by scientific drilling and core-seismic integration. Geochemistry, Geophysics, Geosystems, 27(6):e2025GC012897. https://doi.org/10.1029/2025GC012897

St John, K., Lucchi, R.G., **Ronge, T.A.**, Reilly, B., Gruetzner, J., Sakai, Y., Gebhardt, A.C., Gonzalez-Lanchas, A., Johnson, J.E., Plaza-Faverola, A., Suganuma, Y., Bárcena, M.A., De Schepper, S., Duxbury, L.C., Goss, G., Greco, N., Haygood, L., Husum, K., Iizuka, M., Kapuge, A.K.I.U., Lam, A.R., Libman-Roshal, O., Liu, Y., Monito, L.R., Rosenthal, Y., Sijinkumar, A.V., and Zhong, Y., 2026. Up-current geomorphic events and local tectonics as primary controls on sediment transport by the West Spitsbergen Current and sedimentation in the Fram Strait since ca. 3 Ma. Geology, 54(7):673–677. https://doi.org/10.1130/G54231.1

Abstracts authored by SODCO staff

Briais, A., McNamara, D., Hochmuth, K., Eason, D., Pasquet, G., Dodd, J., Murton, B., Parnell-Turner, R., **LeVay, L.**, and Science Party Expedition 395, 2026. Variability of volcanic constructions along the Reykjanes Ridge: Observations from downhole imaging at IODP395C/395 basement sites. Presented at the EGU General Assembly, Vienna, Austria, 3–8 May 2026. https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu26-16039

D'Angelo, T., Dodd, J., Loth, A., **LeVay, L.**, Briais, A., Parnell-Turner, R., Orcutt, B., Stepanauskas, R., and Lindsay, M., 2026. Quantifying the evolution of a globally distributed deep marine sediment-hosted microbial lineage. Presented at the Goldschmidt Conference, Montréal, Canada, 12–17 July 2026.

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Druitt, T., Metcalfe, A., Preine, J., Pank, K., Kutterolf, S., Hübscher, C., Nomikou, P., **Ronge, T.**, and the IODP Expedition 398 Scientists, 2026. New perspectives of volcanism at the rift-hosted Santorini-Kolumbo system (South Aegean Volcanic Arc), from IODP deep-drilling. Presented at the EGU General Assembly, Vienna, Austria, 3–8 May 2026. https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu26-14798

Guo, P., Tegner, C., Lambart, S., Chatterjee, S., Cunningham, E.H., Millett, J.M., Jones, M.T., Planke, S., Berndt, C., and **Alvarez Zarikian, C.**, 2026. Plume-rift interaction drives excess magmatism in the NE Atlantic margins. Presented at the Goldschmidt Conference, Montréal, Canada, 12–17 July 2026.

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of Antarctic Bottom Water during the last deglaciation. Presented at the Goldschmidt Conference, Montréal, Canada, 12–17 July 2026.

Hurley, A., D'Angelo, T., Dodd, J., Gavelis, G., **LeVay, L.**, Briais, A., Parnell-Turner, R., Orcutt, B., Stepanauskas, R., and Lindsay, M., 2026. Recovery and identification of single cell genomes and DNA fragments from deep subseafloor sediment. Presented at the Astrobiology Science Conference (AbSciCon) 2026, Madison, WI, 17–22 May 2026.

Jones, C.K., Lyons, T.W., Fernández Pérez, T., Joshi, K.B., McCanta, M., Bernard, A., Metcalfe, A., Yoshimoto, T., Druitt, T., Kutterolf, S., and **Ronge, T.**, 2026. Non-traditional biogeochemical redox cascades in extensional basins of the Cristiana-Santorini-Kolumbo Volcanic Field. Presented at the Goldschmidt Conference, Montréal, Canada, 12–17 July 2026.

Keeley, N., Gertisser, R., Petrone, C. M., DeBari, S., Peccia, A., Druitt, T., Kutterolf, S., **Ronge, T.**, and the IODP Expedition 398 Scientists, 2026. Magmatic processes and timescales of the 726 CE eruption of the Kameni Volcano (Greece). Presented at the EGU General Assembly, Vienna, Austria, 3–8 May 2026. https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu26-11993

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Weisser, O., Sinnesael, M., Hemming, S., Jasper, C., Theofanis Karatsolis, B., Hochmuth, K., Di Chiara, A., Satolli, S., Parnell-Turner, R., Briais, A., and **LeVay, L.**, 2026. Astronomical tuning of Pleistocene sediments from North Atlantic drift deposits recovered by IODP Expedition 395. Presented at the EGU General Assembly, Vienna, Austria, 3–8 May 2026. https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-egu26-13112