

USGS's Dr. Steven Bohlen to Become the New President of Joint Oceanographic Institutions/Ocean Drilling Program

November 13, 2000 Dr. Steven R. Bohlen has been named to the position of President of the Joint Oceanographic Institutions and Executive Director of the Ocean Drilling Programs, the organizations' Board of Governors announced today.

Dr. Bohlen, currently an Associate Chief Geologist at the U.S. Geological Survey, (USGS) will join JOI/ODP on November 27, 2000.

He will succeed Admiral James Watkins (USN retired) who stepped down on October 1. Dr. John Orcutt of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Director of the Cecil and Ida Green Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics is serving as interim President.

JOI is the prime contractor to the U.S. National Science Foundation for the Ocean Drilling Program, an international partnership of scientists and research institutions organized to study the evolution and structure of the Earth.

In addition to serving as Associate Chief Geologist for Science in the Geologic Division at USGS, Dr. Bohlen has also worked as a consulting professor at Stanford University (1989-1995), an Associate Professor (tenured) at the Department of Earth Sciences and Space Sciences at the State University of New York at Stony Brook (1985-1988) and a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of California Los Angeles' Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics.

As Associate Chief Geologist for Science in the Geologic Division of USGS, Dr. Bohlen is responsible for the research funded by 10 line items (USGS scientific programs) in the federal budget totaling \$240 million. Those funds support the work of 1,800 scientists and scientific support personnel.

The scientific work directed by Dr. Bohlen includes: coastal and

marine research, global change and climate history, earthquake, volcano, landslide hazards reduction programs, geomagnetic and space weather programs, energy and mineral resources programs and geologic mapping and ecosystem programs.

In his current position, Dr. Bohlen also oversees the International Programs Unit of the USGS and presents scientific findings and defends budgets within the USGS, and before the Administration (the Department of the Interior, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Office of Management and Budget) and the US Congress.

He develops budget initiatives and performance plans relating to the Government Performance and Results Act, sets scientific priorities and oversees peer review of USGS work through the National Research Council of the National Academy of Science.

Dr. Bohlen was born on July 12, 1952 in Indianapolis, Indiana. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1979, M.S. from Michigan in 1977 and A.B. from Dartmouth in 1974.

ODP scientists working on the research ship, the *JOIDES Resolution*, have drilled more than 2,000 holes into the ocean floor Earth's crust in the last 15 years. Recently, scientists have discovered an unsuspected world of microscopic creatures beneath the deep ocean seafloor. Two years ago, they found life farther down than ever – millions of bacteria teeming in sediments more than half a mile below the ocean floor. Scientists expect that life will continue to be found at even deeper levels.

By analyzing cores of sediment and rock, Ocean Drilling Program scientists have established a remarkable series of scientific achievements. In addition to finding subterranean life, they have:

- Proved the once controversial theory of "plate tectonics" as the mechanism to explain movements of the continents and creation of ocean basins.
- Confirmed evidence indicating that a giant meteorite slammed into Earth 65 million years ago, wiping out the dinosaurs and three-fourths of all species living on Earth at that time

- Tracked the historical cycles of climate change, consisting of stable periods lasting thousands of years, but followed by abrupt changes to new, very different conditions when the Earth repeatedly went from an icehouse to a greenhouse and back again.

There are vast places remaining to be investigated under Earth's oceans and within Earth's interior. One example is areas containing gas hydrates, frozen deposits of natural gas, which have the potential to become a major new worldwide energy resource.

The Ocean Drilling Program is also working with other international institutions and nations to form the first expedition to drill in the floor of the Arctic Ocean, near the North Pole, where a wealth of information about the Earth awaits scientists.

Dr. Bohlen will become President of JOI and Executive Director of ODP at a time of change. In a few years the Ocean Drilling Program is scheduled to end and be succeeded by the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program which will include a second drilling vessel to explore regions that are currently inaccessible because of safety considerations in the continental shelf areas of the world. These areas are vital to understanding the oceans as a system. This new program will be lead by the U.S. and Japan, as equal partners, along with significant international participation.