

A FLOATING CLASSROOM AT THE OREGON INSTITUTE OF MARINE BIOLOGY 2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



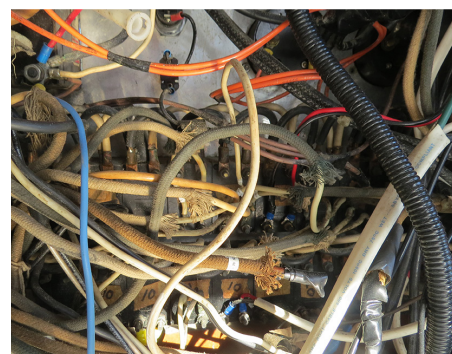
\$500,000 IN STATE FUNDING WILL BE MATCHED WITH PRIVATE PHILANTHROPY AND UNIVERSITY FUNDS TO ENHANCE THE RESEARCH AND TEACHING CAPACITY ON THE SOUTH COAST.

A NEW RESEARCH VESSEL FOR THE OREGON INSTITUTE OF MARINE BIOLOGY

The University of Oregon's Institute of Marine Biology (OIMB) on the South Coast in Charleston, Oregon offers a transformative educational experience to undergraduate and graduate students. It also conducts research on marine organisms and ecosystems from the coast to the deepest parts of the ocean. The OIMB campus includes a marine life center, laboratories, classrooms, public programs including schools and camps for K12 students, and a boat used for teaching and research on marine organisms and ecosystems.

"OIMB is an asset to our community," said State Representative Caddy McKeown (D-Coos Bay). "It is not only an engine for important academic research, but it's also an economic driver that attracts students and their families from around the country and puts the South Coast of Oregon on the map."

The UO's undergraduate marine biology major, the only one offered in Oregon, is ranked among the best degree programs in North America. It is one of the fastest-growing majors at the UO, doubling the



Images from the existing engine room of the *Pluteus*, OIMB's existing 46-year-old research vessel

number of students (now more than 200) since 2008-09.

Students take field trips to the habitats on the Oregon Coast on *R/V Pluteus*, OIMB's boat. The tide pools, mudflats, and rocky shores are easily accessible at low tide,

but the majority of habitats require a reliable boat for access. Students take boat trips to learn oceanographic sampling methods, collect from the ocean floor using dredges and trawls, examine animals in their natural habits, and experience close-up encounters with sea life.

“I have used our current boat for both research and teaching. The new boat would allow us to go further offshore faster and to sample deeper depths, which would be great for me since I study deep-sea invertebrates.” said Caitlin Plowman, a Ph.D. student who completed her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in marine biology at the UO in 2014 and 2017.

NEED FOR A NEW BOAT

OIMB’s current boat was built for teaching in 1973 and used in the relatively calm nearshore waters of the tropical Atlantic. The old engines and electrical systems have reached the end of their useful life, and the boat is too small to carry most classes.

The current boat is limited in several ways:

- Antiquated wiring that is hard to maintain;
- Deck space insufficient for current class sizes;
- Limited deployment and recovery of heavy instruments, gear, and research samples;
- Water-level diesel exhaust pollutes water and exacerbates seasickness;
- No seating for students or faculty members;
- Slow speed wastes significant class time during transits;
- Cramped engine room limits access for maintenance and repair; and
- No specimen sorting tables because of limited deck space.

A new boat will be safer, more environmentally sustainable, and better suited to accommodate teaching and marine research.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

contact **Libby Batlan**
batlan@uoregon.edu or
Hans Bernard
hbernard@uoregon.edu.
UO Government and Community
Relations at **gcr@uoregon.edu** or
541-346-5020.



Photo of students on OIMB’s research vessel, R/V *Pluteus*, circa 2009.

AN ECONOMIC DRIVER

Tarheel Aluminum, a Coos Bay-based family-owned aluminum fabrication company has been selected through a public bid process to design and build the boat. Tarheel is the only local company that bid on the project. If funding is received, the UO will be able to help Tarheel employ more workers and expand their portfolio of business.



Alice Faye, an aluminum ship built locally by Tarheel Aluminum in Charleston, Oregon, similar to the one proposed for OIMB.

“One of the best parts of this project is that it’s also a boon for the local economy,” said State Representative David Brock Smith (R-Port Orford). “Tarheel Aluminum is family owned and operated. Since they won the contract for the design—and will build the boat if the funding comes through—this is a great opportunity to advance research, learning, and the economy all in one fell swoop.”