

**MITCHELL MALONE | Assistant Director of Science Services/Manager of Science Operations, Integrated Ocean Drilling Program, Texas A&M University (malone@iodp.tamu.edu)**

**Degree: When, where, what, and what in?**

I received a PhD in geology from Duke University in 1995. My dissertation focused on understanding the recrystallization of dolomite, combining studies from the geologic record and experimental systems.

**Did you stay in academia at all, and if so, for how long?**

My initial job after completing my degree was as a staff scientist with the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) at Texas A&M University in College Station. Although in a university setting, the staff scientist is a unique position that consists of about 25% research and 75% management. The management portion is primarily working with co-chief scientists and other ocean drilling staff to plan and implement expeditions, typically sailing about once a year. I took this job because some of the most exciting research in my field is associated with scientific ocean drilling. In addition, sailing on drilling expeditions provided a natural opportunity to broaden my research as well as interact and collaborate with top scientists from all over the world. Sailing on an expedition for two months with an international science party of 25–30 scientists with different specialties and backgrounds is really an intense and rewarding learning experience. You also make lifelong friends in such a setting. As anticipated, the position did indeed provide exciting new research opportunities that I wouldn't have had otherwise. Although my

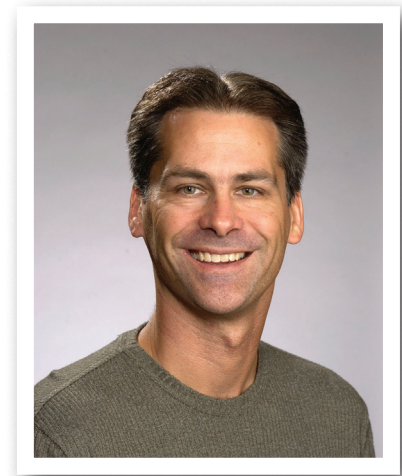
original intent was to stay two to three years and then move into the traditional academic track of teaching and research, I so enjoyed the experience I ended up staying in the position for eight years, sailing on seven expeditions.

**How did you go about searching for a job outside of the university setting?**

When I was completing my degree and started looking for postdoctoral and entry-level faculty positions, I saw the ad for staff scientist in *EOS*. I was familiar with the program because my master's thesis used samples from ODP cores, and several faculty members at Duke had sailed on ODP expeditions, which was enough to pique my interest. After interviewing, I knew this was a great opportunity I couldn't pass up. Although I took the job as staff scientist for the research opportunities, I was pleasantly surprised how much I enjoyed the management part of the job, which opened my eyes to possibilities other than the traditional academic track.

**Is this the only job (post-academia) that you've had? If not, what else did you do?**

I've been at Texas A&M University since obtaining my PhD, although my job duties and career path changed over time. After eight years as an ODP staff scientist and a lot of introspection, I decided that science management was my preferred career path. The Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP) succeeded ODP in 2003, and I took the



job of supervising the science support group, which provides leadership to our internal expedition planning teams.

**What is your current job? What path did you take to get there?**

I'm the Assistant Director of Science Services and Manager of Science Operations at the IODP US Implementing Organization at Texas A&M. In this position, I oversee planning and implementation of drilling expeditions, specifically focusing on science, engineering, drilling operations, and logistical support.

**What did your oceanographic education (or academic career) give you that is useful in your current job?**

Going to sea during graduate school provided a great training environment for skills that can be applied for many jobs. In particular, I use skills such as logistical planning, teamwork, collaboration, problem solving, and how to work with others in challenging situations on a daily basis.

**Is the job satisfying? What aspects of the job do you like best/least?**

I think the science being addressed by IODP is making a fundamental contribution to understanding our planet. Thus, I find it very rewarding to play a role in facilitating the process of addressing the objectives of each expedition. Nobody likes dealing with bureaucracy—not surprisingly, this is the least favorite part of my job.

**Do you have any recommendations for new grads looking for jobs?**

Be open to nontraditional opportunities. Your academic training and related activities have provided basic skills that can be applied to a variety of nonacademic positions. 