Texas Teacher at Sea on the BOLIVAR Project Geophysical Cruise

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Abstract:

UTIG provides K-12 teachers with research experiences in field programs that involve UTIG scientists. I am a 6th-9th grade science teacher in Van Vleck, Texas and in April 2004 I sailed to the southeastern Caribbean aboard the R/V Maurice Ewing as a member of the BOLIVAR Project alongside scientists from the U.S. and Venezuela. Our goal was collect seismic data to image the crust and mantle beneath the Caribbean as part of a study of the tectonic processes accompanying different stages of the Caribbean arc/South America continental collision process. Throughout the 52-day cruise I worked as a watch stander, interpreted newly collected seismic reflection data, helped deploy the streamer, maintained a cruise blog (a chronological journal weblog documenting personal thoughts about my experience), spoke with students in Texas with the telephone on loan from Iridium Satellite Solutions, and responded to email inquiries from shore-based students. It was hard work, but most importantly, a voyage of discovery. With guidance from scientists and GK-12 Fellows at UTIG, I am using my experience and the data collected as the basis for K-12 curriculum resources, including learning activities and a video documentary. Support for my participation and post-cruise activities was provided by the NSF and the Trull Foundation in Texas. If given the opportunity to do this again, I would, without reservation!