

## Art Feature: “Precipice of Discovery”

Carmen Theresa Sanchez-Reddick\*

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Aboard the R/V Atlantis, ALVIN awaits deployment with one pilot and two scientists within its hull excited for the unknowns they may encounter on the sea floor. ALVIN, a human-occupied submersible owned by the U.S. Navy and operated by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, represents the leading edge of exploration. This is exemplified by its use in the discovery of the Titanic’s location and deep-sea hydrothermal vents, key habitats in an environment without light. Our understanding of the deep sea and its inhabitants remains limited, especially compared to more accessible marine communities. Fortunately, there are marine biologists, including those at the University of Oregon, dedicated to exploring and advancing our knowledge about the deep sea. The Young Lab at the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, the UO’s satellite campus in Coos Bay, Oregon, is dedicated to bringing undergraduates on research cruises that use ALVIN and other deep sea exploration vehicles to participate in multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary research. Undergraduate research allows students the opportunity to gain invaluable skills in bench work, scientific writing, networking, and field-specific methodologies, but it can also instill wonder. Working at sea with leading scientists, I have realized that there is so much we don’t know and that there are so many questions left to be answered by the next generation of researchers. By conducting research as undergraduates, we are developing our skills and curiosity to be trailblazers in our respective fields at the precipice of discovery, just like ALVIN has been for the last 58 years.

**Medium:** *Digital photography, Canon EOS 5D Mark III, Canon Zoom EF 20-70mm lens.*

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