

Integer Technologies, University of Southern Mississippi Announce \$25M Defense Contract



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Partnership will advance Navy's decision-making tech for autonomous seabed warfare

Gulfport, Miss. – July 16, 2025 – Integer Technologies and the University of Southern Mississippi announce the Office of Naval Research has awarded their team a \$25 million ceiling contract, with a fully funded initial base period of \$4.3 million. The applied research contract supports the development of novel software to help the U.S. Navy maintain maritime dominance and increase its seabed warfare capabilities.

The program, titled Intelligent Autonomous Systems for Seabed Warfare, will enhance underwater missions and data collection for unmanned vessels by improving their decision-making capabilities at the edge. This will allow unmanned vessels to adapt more effectively to changing environmental conditions and improve their ability to identify objects on the seafloor.

This program will develop innovative technology for unmanned underwater systems that can autonomously make sense of large, high-dimensional data sets in real-time. This technology augments the Navy's ability to conduct unattended missions with unmanned and autonomous platforms.

Increasing the independence, flexibility, and intelligence of

these platforms provides the U.S. fleet with the reliable autonomous operations needed to achieve their mission and national security goals.

Integer and USM will work together to develop a full solution that includes edge-deployed software tools that can assess environmental, platform, and mission data to make decisions about how to best collect and process complex datasets. They will develop predictive tools that leverage advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) that can enable unmanned platforms to adapt their missions in real-time.

The program combines USM's strengths in ocean engineering and oceanography with Integer's expertise in creating predictive software models for unmanned platforms that combine data, physics, and AI to deliver decision advantage in uncertain environments.

As part of this program, Integer has established an office at USM's Roger F. Wicker Center for Ocean Enterprise Facility (Wicker Center) in Gulfport, Miss. This location allows for close collaboration between USM's and Integer's engineers and scientists, and convenient access for in-water testing in the Gulf of America.

"This is an ideal moment for this research on software for ocean sensing and seabed warfare. USM's oceanography expertise will combine with Integer's predictive technology to help us explore and master the ocean floor, earth's last frontier. These unmanned, subsurface vessels will boost the United States' edge in undersea warfare and support the bustling blue economy along Mississippi's coast," said U.S. Senator Roger Wicker, the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"The Navy's investment in cutting-edge seabed warfare technology in Mississippi reflects well on the critical role our state continues to play in advancing our national

security,” U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith said. “The partnership between Integer Technologies and the University of Southern Mississippi will not only strengthen the Navy’s capabilities, but also bring high-skill jobs and research opportunities to the Gulf Coast. I’m proud to support initiatives that position Mississippi as a leader in defense innovation and that create opportunities for our students, engineers, and scientists.”

“Integer’s presence in Gulfport will be the epicenter of our work to deploy and test AI-driven software on maritime unmanned systems,” said Duke Hartman, Chief Executive Officer & Co-founder at Integer. “We are grateful to Senators Wicker and Hyde-Smith, USM, and all those in the South Mississippi community who supported this investment in the state. The beautiful Wicker Center offers direct ocean access where our team of Gulfport-based engineers will work alongside USM’s ocean scientists to make unmanned systems more intelligent and effective for our military and commercial customers.”

“This award demonstrates The University of Southern Mississippi’s reputation as a leader in ocean research and blue economy innovation,” said Kelly Lucas, Ph.D., Vice President for Research at Southern Miss. “By establishing operations at the Roger F. Wicker Center for Ocean Enterprise, Integer Technologies is bringing high-skill jobs to the Gulf Coast and creating a technology ecosystem that will attract additional partners and investments. This program exemplifies how university-industry partnerships can drive both scientific advancement and economic development in Mississippi.”