



AGU'S ETHICS,  
DIVERSITY, EQUITY  
AND INCLUSION

# 2020

## Annual Report

**AGU** ADVANCING  
EARTH AND  
SPACE SCIENCE

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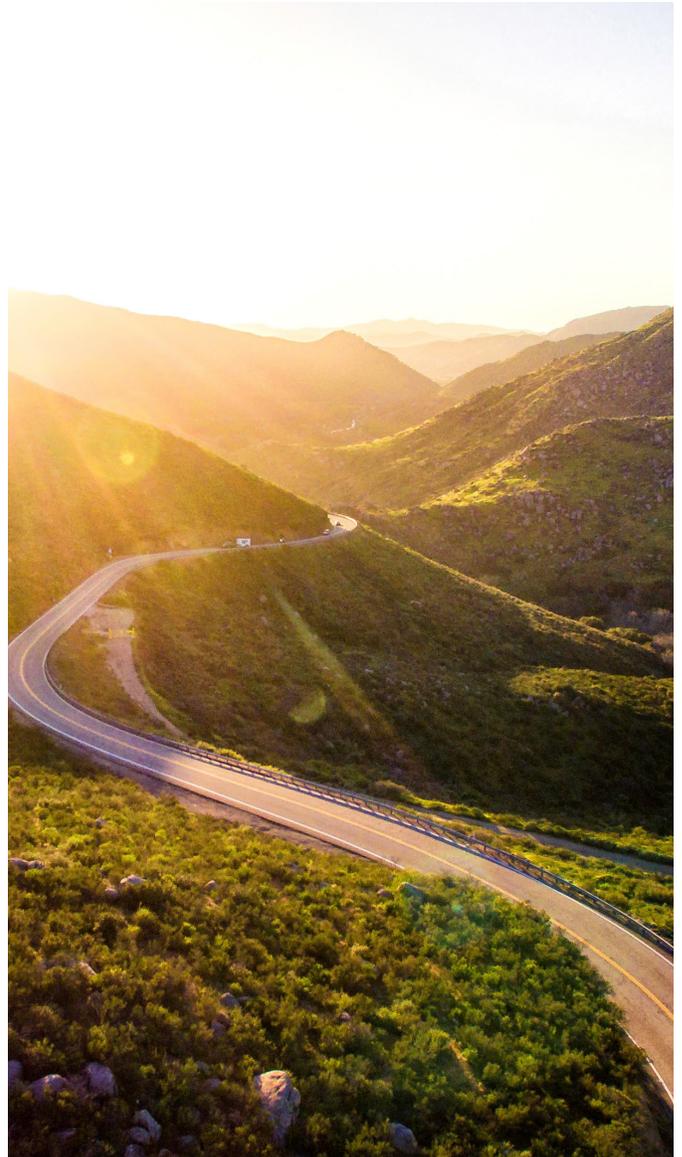
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## Introduction

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In 2020, we witnessed unprecedented societal challenges and calls to action impacting the entire Earth and Space Sciences (ESS) community. The global COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately impacted racial and ethnic minorities, coincided with an additional clarion call to address systemic racism, initiating a global movement to reexamine past and current diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices across all major institutions. From a DEI point of view, 2020 can be summed up as a year of coping, reckoning and addressing significant new challenges. However, 2020 was also a year of DEI opportunity, advancement and innovation at AGU. Much of that opportunity, innovation and advancement is based on AGU's new [strategic plan](#), adopted in April 2020, with a key goal to build, cultivate and support an inclusive science community that builds on past DEI strategic plan initiatives.

Under the AGU strategic umbrella, a broad series of interconnected DEI-related efforts across the organization provide a solid foundation towards achieving AGU's inclusive science vision. These efforts include AGU's eight action steps to address race and racism, the new AGU LANDInG grant initiative, implementation of a new public-facing AGU DEI dashboard, the expansion of community science impacts by AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange, proactive advocacy for DEI-related legislation, progress toward gender parity in AGU honors, increased resources towards creating a more diverse ESS talent pipeline, robust DEI programming and revised registration policy for a more inclusive 2020 AGU Fall Meeting, and authorship of multiple DEI-related reports and initiatives to examine and help advance gender participation in scientific publications. Highlights of AGU's 2020 DEI efforts are detailed below.



## AGU takes steps to combat systemic racism

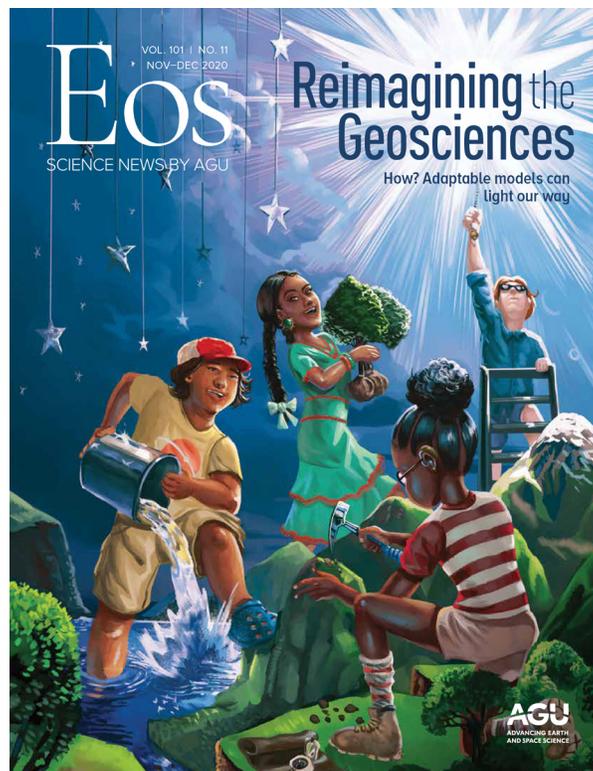
AGU was inspired by the call to action from the teams who created [Call for a Robust Anti-Racism Plan for the Geosciences](#) and [notimeforsilence.org](#), which both also received AGU's [2020 Presidential Citation](#). AGU is building upon that call by taking [eight bold, meaningful actions](#) to address systemic racism. These actions impact where we invest our money; how we select our leaders; how we share our science; what work we do, honor and reward; and how we foster the next, inclusive generation of scientists and leaders.

AGU President Robin Bell and the chair of AGU's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee Lisa White published two op-eds on DEI topics in science and academia in 2020 in [Scientific American](#) and [Diverse: Issues in Higher Education](#). Both op-eds focused on the need for greater diversity in science to solve societal challenges and address systemic racism in academia.

AGU's science news magazine *Eos* published more than 50 [DEI-related articles in 2020](#) and featured a double issue on "[Shaping the Future of Science](#)." In time for AGU's first all-virtual Fall Meeting in 2020, this issue of *Eos* looked at the ways in which the geoscience community is reimagining itself to create a more diverse, equitable and adaptable future for all. In addition, news stories mentioning AGU's DEI work appeared in *E&E News*, *Inside Higher Ed*, *CEO Update*, *Space.com*, *Science*, *Axios*, *Smithsonian*, *Physics World* and *Nature*.

AGU staff and members of the [AGU Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee](#) also helped create *Cultivating Leadership for Change and Justice*, [a workshop series](#) across several geoscience organizations designed to help current and emerging geoscience leaders support recent calls to action for anti-racism in academia.

While 2020 has shone a harsh spotlight on how our society is failing Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), AGU's DEI initiatives are working to help answer the call for a more just scientific enterprise.



Cover illustration by Carlos Basabe.

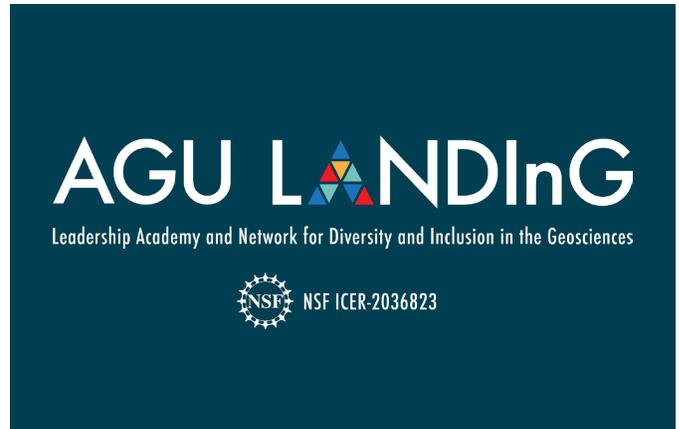
## AGU LANDInG to cultivate DEI champions

In 2020, AGU [announced the upcoming launch](#) of AGU LANDInG (Leadership Academy and Network for Diversity and Inclusion in the Geosciences), which will cultivate and elevate DEI champions within the geosciences to drive the necessary culture shift.

Led by AGU and funded by a [\\$495,000 grant from the National Science Foundation](#) (NSF), AGU LANDInG will develop a sustainable network of leaders to champion DEI values and practices. By providing learning and professional development opportunities for geoscientists, faculty members and academic leaders, this new program will both encourage greater DEI efforts and broaden participation across geoscience disciplines.

In partnership with other geoscience societies, including the Geological Society of America and the American Meteorological Society, AGU LANDInG will:

- ▶ **Implement** an open access, virtual platform of resources to support a broad community of DEI champions in both industry and academia, which will develop into a thriving community of practice (CoP).
- ▶ **Develop** and implement a two-year, cohort-based program for professional development in DEI leadership within the geosciences.
- ▶ **Create** opportunities for DEI champions to have direct experience leading DEI initiatives. Within the CoP network, DEI champions will learn and be able to join DEI efforts across professional societies.
- ▶ **Raise** the visibility and recognition of DEI leadership in the geosciences.



Scheduled to launch in June 2021, AGU LANDInG will provide annual cohorts of champions with resources, professional development and mentoring to develop equitable, inclusive and welcoming environments across all scientific disciplines.

This LANDInG initiative work is a strong complement to the ongoing related AGU work already in progress. This includes the AGU ethics and equity initiative supported by a three-year Alfred P. Sloan Foundation grant to supply new work climate assessment tools and new educational workshops to the global STEM community, and AGU's co-leadership in establishing and growing the influence and impact of the [Societies Consortium for Addressing Harassment in STEM](#)—now with more than 130 member societies.

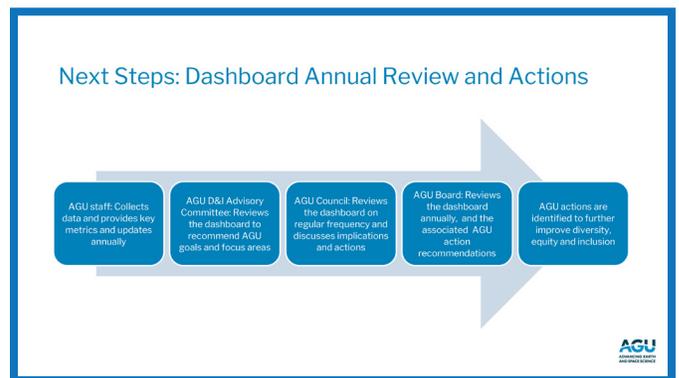
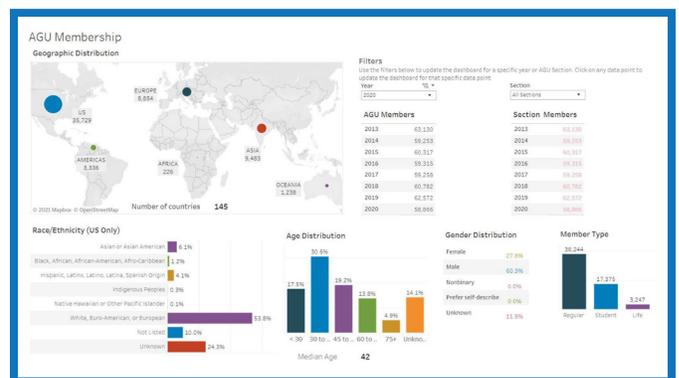
## New dashboard tracks DEI across AGU membership and programs

While much of AGU's DEI work is outward-facing—such as partnerships with other societies and academic institutions, workshops and trainings, reporting and presenting—we also recognize the need to reflect on AGU's efforts to promote and track DEI efforts across our membership and AGU programs.

[AGU's DEI Dashboard](#) establishes a baseline to measure our efforts to increase DEI across the AGU community. By taking a critical look at where we stand now—across all AGU programs—we can identify how to keep improving. AGU seeks to encourage greater numbers of women, underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, people with disabilities, and those who live and work outside the U.S. to not only pursue STEM careers and thrive but also to join us in making our science, meetings, publications and awards more inclusive and equitable. The new AGU DEI Dashboard was created in response to a charge to the [AGU Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee](#), and its development was guided by the AGU Council and the AGU Global Engagement Committee. Quantitative and qualitative assessment data are included.

The information spotlighted in the dashboard summary snapshot was compiled through self-reported information from AGU members. Data limitations, collection methodology and future collection plans are highlighted in the baseline report. It looks across gender, age, race/ethnicity and geographic regions where these data are voluntarily available, and includes data on AGU leadership and AGU staff composition, as detailed in a blog post on [From the Prow](#) by AGU CEO and Executive Director Randy W. Fiser, which also commits to increasing AGU staff diversity.

Detailed 2020 AGU DEI baseline demographic data are [found here](#), including an analysis of where future emphasis and progress are most needed.



## AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange advances DEI and environmental justice

The mission of AGU's [Thriving Earth Exchange](#)—to strengthen and enhance collaboration among communities, scientists and partner organizations so all communities can build healthy, resilient, thriving, just and ecologically responsible futures—further demonstrates AGU's commitment to DEI as well as environmental and climate justice.



AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange advances that mission by working with organizations serving grassroots community groups to ensure that communities of color, isolated or rural communities, and communities with less wealth have the opportunity to work with scientists to make progress on their priorities and answer their science-related questions.

- As of early 2021, one-third of Thriving Earth Exchange projects have focused on environmental or climate justice with historically marginalized communities. These projects have aimed to reduce pollution, reduce vulnerability to flooding or protect sacred and natural spaces.
- In 2020, AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange created a fund that community groups can draw from to support their projects. AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange also worked with partners to better support community groups that have less experience completing forms or applying for programmatic support.
- AGU's Thriving Earth Exchange recruits and prepares volunteer fellows who serve as project managers. The training for fellows includes a section specifically devoted to DEI and justice, and embeds these values throughout the course. Thriving Earth Exchange fellows are more diverse than science is overall.
- An innovative session at the AGU Fall Meeting 2020, "[Convergence, Collaboration, Justice and the Future of the Sciences](#)," highlighted activities planned by the Native Science coalition with AGU and supported a land acknowledgement working group. In addition, Thriving Earth Exchange organized special sessions highlighting the voices, perspectives and experiences of community leaders and scientists of color.

## Advocating for DEI in U.S. policy

AGU hosted its first Virtual Advocacy Days workshop on 9 June. The workshop trained more than 50 scientists on how to effectively speak with members of Congress about DEI in science, and request support for multiple pieces of legislation that would increase DEI in STEM fields in the U.S.

- During the following two weeks of AGU DEI Virtual Advocacy Days, more than 300 scientists participated in the event, resulting in connections with 150+ members of Congress through various means, including 30+ virtual meetings, 640+ emails and more than 100 posts on [social media](#).
- As part of the event, AGU also published a series of blog posts on various aspects of DEI in the sciences, written primarily by Voices for Science advocates. [Paula Buchanan](#) and [Maria Mejia](#) provided a post about microaggressions and supporting people of color. [Heidi Steltzer](#) wrote a piece about becoming a better ally, and AGU published a blog post on the [importance of immigrant visas](#).
- AGU also added its voice to support national legislation addressing anti-Asian racism during the early days of the pandemic.

## Supporting a more diverse and inclusive ESS talent Pool

Inaugurated in 2019, [AGU's Bridge Program](#), part of the Inclusive Graduate Education Network, partners with academic institutions across the country to recruit and retain underrepresented students who are applying to geoscience graduate schools.

- By the end of 2020, 31 academic departments were selected and named as AGU Bridge Partners.
- During the 2020 cycle of student recruitment, seven students were matched and admitted to graduate programs at five of AGU's partner departments.

Each year, AGU's [Student Travel Grant Program](#) and [Berkner Travel Fellowship](#) offer financial assistance to students and early career presenters from backgrounds underrepresented in the Earth and space sciences to attend Fall Meeting. The majority (57%) of awardees currently reside outside of the U.S., and nearly half (46%) of awardees based in the U.S. identify as part of an underrepresented racial/ethnic group.

To offset the unique challenges of 2020, AGU expanded the eligible uses for travel grant funds, allowing recipients to cover expenses beyond those solely associated with a virtual meeting. After participating in Fall Meeting, recipients received an additional payment to cover a portion of their educational or research expenses, such as tuition, fees and equipment.

## Metrics from AGU's travel grants program in 2020 include:

### Gender identification

# 47%

of awardees identify as women (117/251)

# 1%

of awardees identify as non-binary (2/251)

# 52%

of awardees identify as men (132/251)

### Travel and collaboration

# 46%

of awardees had never studied or collaborated outside of their country of residence (115/251)

### Fall Meeting participation

# 70%

of awardees had never participated in an AGU Fall Meeting (177/251)

# 26%

had attended and presented (65/251)

# 4%

had attended but never presented (9/251)

## Recognizing DEI excellence in AGU's honors program

Over the past few years, AGU has been working to increase DEI within its [Honors and Recognition program](#).

- In 2020, the gender gap continued to narrow, with 47% of Union Medals, Awards and Prizes (MAP) going to women.
- The majority (75%) of scientists receiving Union MAP in 2020 were based in the U.S.
- In 2020, 47% of Union MAP recipients identified as white. Approximately 3% of recipients identified as Asian or Asian American, 3% as Black, 3% as Hispanic/Latino and 3% as Indigenous Peoples. The remainder (41%) of Union MAP recipients did not self-report their race.
- Nearly 31% of Union MAP recipients were between the ages of 40 and 49. Twenty-two percent were 65 years old or older, while the age groups 30 and 39 years of age and 50 and 64 years old each had 19% of MAP recipients.

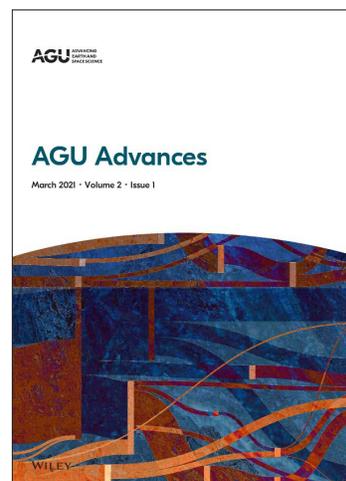
Information on diversity in the AGU honors program for the prior five years can be found in the [AGU Honors Diversity Report](#).



## Advancing DEI knowledge and practice via AGU publications

The AGU publications team provided significant new insights and advancements in DEI in 2020, with an increased focus on gender equity participation in STEM, including:

- Updates and analysis of COVID impacts in Earth and space science publications with the [preliminary report](#) available on ESSOAr.
- Two [papers](#) analyzing the role of gender and race/ethnicity in authorship groups and science impacts.
- *AGU Advances* [special collection](#) on DEI in the Earth and space sciences.
- Leadership across scholarly publications to provide an [antiracism tool kit](#) for publications.
- The [AGU FAIR Data initiative](#), helping to assure fair and equitable data access.
- AGU Publications Director, Randy Townsend, named [Editor in Chief for Journal of Ethics in Publishing](#).



## Increased DEI programming at AGU meetings

AGU's DEI programming had a strong presence at AGU meetings in 2020.



The [2020 AGU Fall Meeting](#) was 100% virtual and included new registration policies and fee structures for target populations to help promote more broader and more diverse attendance.



The 2020 Fall Meeting also included a full series of more than 80 diversity and inclusion-related events and activities over the course of the three-week meeting, including four DEI-related plenaries.



AGU issued [Best Practices for Inclusive Remote Meetings](#) guidance.



AGU trained more than 50 volunteers to take part in the [Safe AGU](#) program at the 2020 Fall Meeting. This program is in place to assist meeting participants who may need to report an instance of harassment or other safety and security issue. The February 2020 Ocean Sciences Meeting also included the Safe OSM program.



The AGU Meetings Teams also worked to help provide a more accessible meeting. This resulted in a novel approach for captioning content, to include both AI generated captions and live captions.

## Summary of 2020 ethics complaints

AGU staff continues its work to proactively educate and advise on [AGU's Scientific Integrity and Professional Ethics](#) policy and practices, including leading follow-up resolution of any allegations of concern in partnership with the AGU Ethics Chair. During 2020, 18 allegations of misconduct were made to AGU's Ethics Committee, not including four Safe AGU complaints made during the 2020 AGU Fall Meeting, which are handled separately. Sixteen of the 18 complaints were resolved, and two remain under investigation. Thirteen complaints were research related, four complaints were personal conduct related, which includes issues of harassment, bullying and discrimination; and one complaint was a perceived conflict of interest. Two of the four misconduct complaints resulted in AGU sanctions.

| Year | Publications Related<br>Misconduct allegations<br>(Fabrication, Falsification,<br>Plagiarism) | Personal Misconduct<br>Allegations (Harassment,<br>Bullying, Discrimination, etc.) | Safe AGU Complaints<br>at Fall Meeting | Total |
|------|---|--|--|-------|
| 2020 | 13  | 5  | 4                                      | 22    |
| 2019 | 21  | 3  | 11                                     | 35    |
| 2018 | 11  | 2  | 11                                     | 24    |

Combined, the above 2020 DEI programming activities represent a comprehensive and integrated AGU effort to ensure progress towards AGU's strategic vision and goals of promoting and exemplifying an inclusive science culture across the Earth and Space Sciences. We welcome your feedback and support.



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