

ABOUT AGU

Tomorrow's AGU: Seeking a New Executive Director

AGU has begun the search for a new executive director to serve in partnership with AGU's elected leadership to build tomorrow's AGU—the contemporary scientific society envisioned by our members and needed for 2010 and beyond.

This is a rare opportunity to take the helm of a highly respected, financially strong membership organization in a moment of transformation and help us achieve our goals to grow in impact. Reporting directly to the Board of Directors, the executive director is responsible for providing strategic vision, leadership, and overall management to the organization according to the direction set by AGU's elected leaders.

Our Foundation

AGU began in 1919 when the U.S. National Research Council established a scientific society to “focus on the organization and dissemination of scientific information in the interdisciplinary and international field of geophysics.” For more than 50 years, AGU operated as an unincorporated affiliate of the National Academy of Sciences; in 1972 it became an independent organization. During its first 31 years, AGU was directed by five general secretaries, one of whom, John Fleming, served 25 years (1922–1947).

Under the leadership of two long-term executive directors—Waldo Smith (1950–1970) and A. Fred Spilhaus Jr. (1970–2009)—AGU has become the world's preeminent Earth and space science society. With a membership of more than 55,000, AGU joins scientists together in unselfish cooperation in research to advance scientific understanding for the benefit of humanity. The considerable scope of AGU's operations results in

a budget in excess of \$33 million that supports more than 5300 scientific article publications per year, with online publication of 10–20 articles daily; a worldwide meetings program capped by the Fall Meeting, which attracts more than 15,000 attendees annually from over 100 countries; and the beginnings of outreach efforts in education, science policy, and public information.

AGU's Transition

While AGU's scientific values and principles stand the test of time, its science is evolving against a dynamic backdrop of rapid economic, political, and technological change. Communicating science through meetings, publications, and public education and outreach needs to keep pace with these changes. AGU has the opportunity to play an expanding role in advancing Earth and space science and its potential contributions to the critical challenges facing humanity today. For this reason, rather than immediately seeking a new executive director, the AGU Council carefully crafted a thorough transition process to thoughtfully take stock of where the organization is today, where it needs to go tomorrow, and what kind of staff leader is most needed to get us there. To do this, the Council took several important steps.

Step 1: Hired a professional interim executive director to prepare the way for the next executive director by energizing and updating many aspects of AGU's dedicated staff structure, functions, and member service culture. The interim director is not a candidate for the executive director position.

Step 2: Approved changes to create an improved governance structure that will enable AGU to more effectively operate in

today's evolving environment and to work in partnership with the new executive director.

Step 3: Convened a Forum on the Future with 60 stakeholders from throughout the AGU system to recommend AGU's strategic direction for the next decade that the executive director will play a key role in leading.

Step 4: Affirmed the charge to the Executive Review Committee (ERC), chaired by General Secretary Carol Finn and consisting of the rest of the AGU Executive Committee, plus four section presidents, to conduct the search for the new executive director. The ERC engaged Isaacson, Miller, a leading executive search firm, to ensure that we find the best possible candidate for the future.

AGU Seeks New Executive Director

The executive director position calls for a person of exceptional intellectual vision and scientific grounding; a proven leader who listens well and communicates persuasively; and a person who embraces the pressing scientific work of AGU passionately and has demonstrated the ability to lead an organizational transformation effort. This executive will serve as a key spokesperson for the organization and will develop a visibly important platform that enhances AGU's capabilities to collaboratively influence the field, policy making, and public understanding and support.

Interested parties can request a position description by writing to the following electronic mailbox: 3934@imsearch.com. Applications and nominations, including a resume and a substantive cover letter responding to the challenges cited in the position, should also be sent to 3934@imsearch.com. Electronic submission of materials is required. *The American Geophysical Union is an equal opportunity employer and welcomes a diverse pool of candidates in this search.*

Timeline: AGU interviews are expected to occur during February–March 2010.

—TIMOTHY L. GROVE, AGU President; and CAROL FINN, AGU General Secretary; please contact Isaacson, Miller (E-mail: 3934@imsearch.com) with any questions.