

ABOUT AGU

A Challenge to the Membership

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Students are key to the future of the Earth and space sciences and to the vitality of our global AGU community. More than 7300 students are now members of the Union (17% of the total membership); of these, 30% live outside the U.S. Equally important, student attendance at AGU's major meetings has been steadily climbing. In 2004, a remarkable 25% of the registrants for major AGU meetings were students.

An increasing number of qualified students applying for travel grants to attend these meetings. Yet, only 5% (see Figure 1) receive these modest grants of \$300–\$650 because Union resources have not kept pace with demand. More students need financial aid, and our charge is to “find” the funds to help them.

The Committee on Education and Human Resources (CEHR) evaluates its funding priorities every other year. Considerable preference is given to students who have never attended an AGU meeting and stand to gain the most, and to undergraduates contemplating careers in the Earth and space sciences. Selection is also based on disciplinary breadth, geographic distribution, and participation of underrepresented groups. AGU grants are supplemental awards. In fact, many applicants—particularly non-U.S. students who have greater difficulty accessing funds—use this award criterion as leverage in seeking support from other sources.

More funding for student travel is needed—and needed now. Council presently allocates \$14,000/year (income from general endowment) for students to attend the Fall Meeting, the Joint Assemblies, and the Ocean Sciences Meeting, in years when it is held. About

\$200,000 in new endowment is required to help raise the annual number of student travel grants to about 50, to adjust award amounts over time, and to secure the program for coming decades.

Together, we can help make this possible by giving generously to this year's Fund Drive. I (Jamie Austin) have personally made a challenge gift for this purpose (see sidebar). Please join us and other colleagues who have pledged support.

—JAMES A. AUSTIN, JR., Chair, AGU Development Board; and CATHY MANDUCA, Chair, Committee on Education and Human Resources

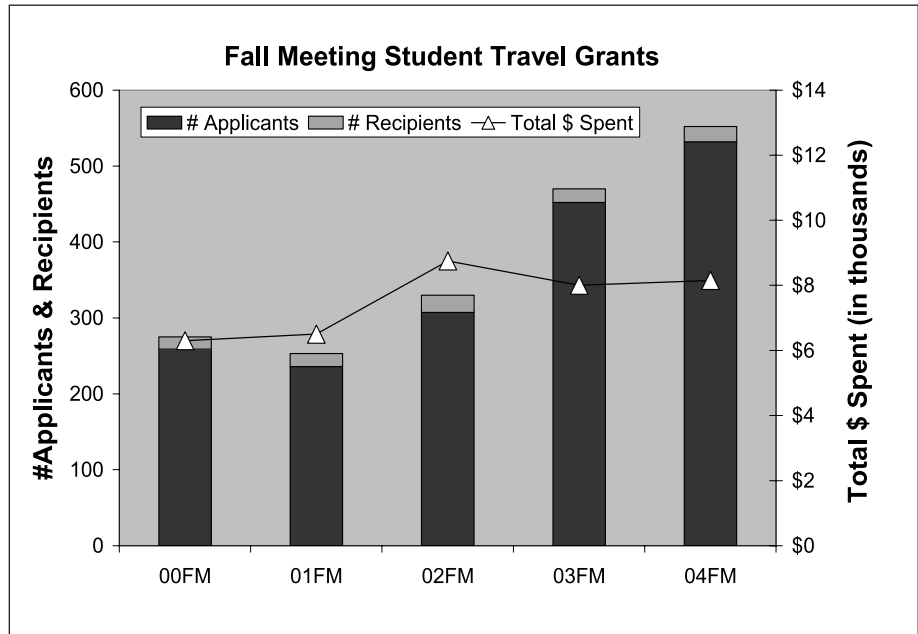


Fig. 1. Student travel award statistics (U.S. and non-U.S.) for the Fall Meeting, 2000–2004. About one-third of all grants are awarded to non-U.S. students.

2005 Fund Drive Fueled by Challenge Gift

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AGU Executive Director Fred Spilhaus has announced a challenge gift of \$50,000 from James A. Austin, Jr. for student travel grants. Austin, AGU's Development Board Chair, will personally donate \$1 for every \$3 given by other Union members and friends for this purpose. The goal is to raise a total of \$200,000—including Austin's gift—by 1 December 2005 so that contributions can have an immediate impact. Endowment and annual gifts designated for this purpose qualify as matching funds.

Since 2001, AGU has conducted two fundraising appeals annually—a campaign for unrestricted contributions during the membership renewal cycle and a fund drive for restricted contributions that have lasting impact. The fund drives always focus on the future: the future of Earth and space science, of individual scientists, and of the Union. This year's fund drive focuses sharply and exclusively on the future of young scientists and the immediate need for more student travel grants.

There are many ways for you to contribute and help meet the Austin challenge. To make

your secure online gift, go to www.agu.org/givingtoagu, select “Fund Drive” on the menu bar. When you complete the online response form, be sure to designate your gift to General Endowment or Education Outreach (if all of your gift is to be used now). If you wish to make a monthly gift, arrange a special pledge schedule, or donate stock, please call the development office at 202.777.7514. You can also complete the form on the next page and mail it with your gift to AGU, 2000 Florida Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009. Remember to include “2005 AGU Fund Drive” on your check.



Challenge Response Form



Yes, I/We want to help bring more students to AGU meetings!

I/we will contribute: \$1000 \$500 \$250 \$100
 Other \$_____

Full payment is enclosed.

Payment will be made as follows:

August September October November

Monthly, and you are authorized to charge the credit card listed below on or about the 15th of each month.

Please keep my gift Anonymous.

Method of payment:

Check Visa MasterCard Securities

Credit Card # _____ Expir. Date _____

Signature _____

*Please make checks payable to AGU and send to:
AGU, 2000 Florida Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009, USA*

This gift is in honor/memory of:

Your Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Postal Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

If you wish to discuss various gift options, please call the Development Office at 202.777.7514 or email development@agu.org