

The Power of Partnerships: Moving Science Forward

A REPORT FROM RANDY W. FISER, CEO, AGU



2022 presented incredible opportunities for AGU to advance programs and projects that move science forward through local and global partnerships with scientists, community leaders, foundations, and corporations. Partnerships have always been an important part of AGU's work: more than 1000 partner organizations have contributed to AGU's effectiveness and growth. Guided by our strategic plan, AGU is proactively expanding the circle of partners to ensure the fulfillment of our vision of a thriving, sustainable and equitable future supported by scientific discovery, innovation, and action.

Our partnerships are national and global, serving four important goals. They extend our reach, enhance our contributions, expand our community, and multiply our impact. And, along with our partners, we continue to experiment, learn, and adapt. We weigh new opportunities carefully, assessing value and risk in considering each potential partnership.

AGU partnerships are building the next-generation of Earth and space scientists as well as supporting early-career scientists. I am especially proud of AGU's sustained commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI); a diverse and inclusive scientific culture is critical to address the challenges that face our planet. Throughout 2022, the AGU community continued to take steps toward systemic transformation in Earth and space science (ESS) and across STEM—through our own diligent work as well as through cooperation with external partners.

This past summer **The Second National Conference: Justice in Geoscience** was held at AGU's offices in Washington, DC—fully 50 years after the First National Conference—led by AGU's early-career scientists. Focusing on building community and advancing justice and inclusion in the geosciences, the conference brought together almost 300 participants (in-person and online) to share strategies, successes, failures, obstacles, and potential tools, in the ongoing effort to broaden participation, build communities and coalitions, and enhance outcomes for geoscientists from historically excluded groups. The partnership was made possible by the support of leading foundation partners committed to building community and ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion in the geosciences.



*The Second National
Conference: Justice
in Geoscience*

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AND SPACE SCIENCE

AGU members and donors are partners, and we leverage their talents to foster early-career and next-generation scientists' development. One such effort is AGU's **Mentoring365**—a program pairing students and early career professionals with established experts in the Earth and space sciences to share ideas and build a more inclusive community. Nine partners have joined AGU to create a robust, diverse roster of scientists and other professionals available for in-person or virtual collaboration, whether short-term or long-term.

The **AGU Bridge Program**, similarly, works with 51 partner university departments to increase representation and improve outcomes for historically marginalized students in graduate geoscience education within the Inclusive Graduate Education Network (IGEN). Nearly 85 percent of Bridge Program faculty agreed that their admissions practices had changed through their involvement in the program; the other 15 percent had already established best practices in admission processes. Fully 100 percent of the responding Bridge Program students said that their faculty mentors “were available when support or guidance is needed,” “show genuine concern and treat them with respect,” and “provide constructive feedback.”

The AGU **Thriving Earth Exchange** encompasses well over 200 projects, either recently launched or already completed, that partner an individual scientist (or scientific team) with a community seeking scientific information to address environmental concerns. Over 17 million people and their communities are impacted by these projects, including international communities. This year alone, the Thriving Earth Exchange launched over 50 new projects around the globe.

As the effects of climate change become more apparent, policymakers and scientists around the globe are considering a wide range of emerging approaches to reduce risk. **AGU is partnering with other thought leaders in creating an ethical framework for climate intervention.** As part of our work to engage others and move the development of an ethical framework forward, AGU established an Advisory Board with global representation and made presentations at the Lisbon UN Oceans Conference. Over the summer of 2022, AGU hosted 4 workshops and, in the Fall, held a Hybrid Summit. Each of the workshops included partner organizations and leaders including a diverse, global panel of advisors while also eliciting the input of the AGU community.

In November, AGU sent a delegation of 6 to the 2022 Conference of Parties (COP27) held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. We were pleased to partner with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in the Ocean Pavilion. AGU held several panel discussions including the establishment of an Ethical Framework for Climate Intervention as well as others on Women's Leadership in Ocean Science, Environmental Justice and Ocean Science and A Global Opening of Science. Informally, AGU conducted bilateral meetings with a range of organizations, governments, and corporations. I was



COP27 Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt

encouraged to see many informal conversations on the ethics of climate intervention taking place in different pavilions.

At **AGU's Fall Meeting** in December, we had 18,000 people gathering in person, with another 7,000 participating online. This was an incredible demonstration of partnerships between AGU members and donors, scientists, corporations, foundations, and attendees. It was also a reminder of our often less visible partners—the publishers of our scientific research, and the manufacturers of the scientific tools that enable the ESS community to do its work.

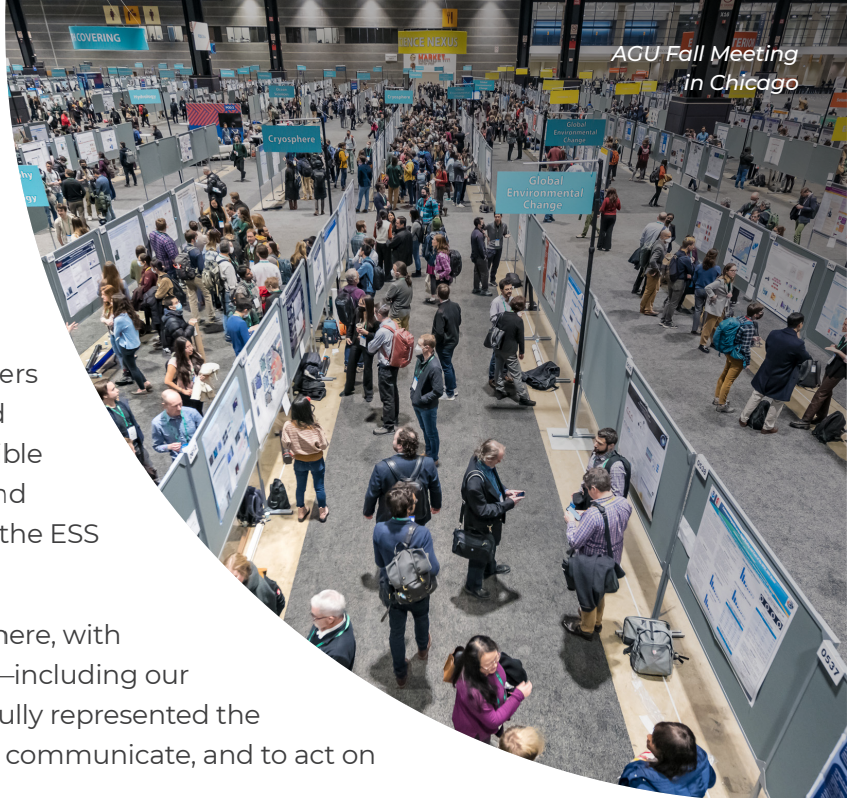
I am especially proud of the diversity we saw everywhere, with our attendees, our audience, and our programming—including our first transgender woman plenary speaker. All powerfully represented the perspective of communities that need us to listen, to communicate, and to act on the climate.

I was also profoundly struck seeing the power of our entire community sharing their science and learning from each other. The commitment and energy was palpable: watching the early career scientists and students working with mentors, and seasoned scientists learning from each other.

A critical part of AGU's mission is to make science available to the widest possible audience while embracing an inclusive scientific culture. **The Open Science & Data Help Desk** at our annual Fall Meeting was part of a long-standing partnership bringing together the informatics community with diverse researchers across ESS seeking new channels to disseminate their findings. Our partnership with Earth Science Information Partners (ESIP) is critical to the success of the Help Desk.

With an increasing emphasis on collaboration, we are building greater capacity within our own organization to serve as an effective partner—whether as the lead organization, or simply providing needed resources or a platform for the work of partner organizations. Meeting an urgent global challenge will require humility along with a willingness to serve the larger community—a role I think of as “servant leadership.”

Above all, through our partnerships we can continue to learn how to create sustainable solutions to address global challenges. A holistic approach to solving problems will require us to nurture an array of partnerships aligned with AGU's goals and values. Broadly inclusive partnerships can eliminate the unintended consequences that may result from a too-narrow perspective; only by including the widest range of voices can we ensure that we are solving the challenging problems we want to address. Important learning must also come from the community, who have already identified key problems—and may have already envisioned appropriate solutions to them.

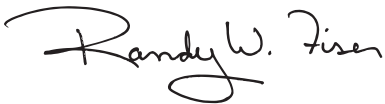


Thank you

I am grateful to our extraordinary AGU staff, volunteer leaders, donors and partners for their steadfast work and commitment. Our active partnerships make it possible to move science forward, and I feel we are only at the beginning of this exciting journey.

For anyone who shares our goals for creating sustainable solutions and who can envision a partnership opportunity—please connect with us! There are many important ways to join in this work and support the science perhaps through volunteering or financial contributions, or by bringing new people and organizations to the table.

Thank you for being a part of this dedicated community that values science, and that seeks action to make real and lasting progress.



Randy W. Fiser