

2020

AGU Annual Report

AGU[®]

ADVANCING EARTH
AND SPACE SCIENCE



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President's Letter

2020 was a year like no other — from the worldwide pandemic to universities and research being paused (or, when possible, conducted online) to global demonstrations against systemic racism. It was a year where the importance of fundamental science supporting our very global society was never clearer as we witnessed the rapid development of the vaccines from basic science in a global open data ecosystem. It was also a year for frank honest reflections about systemic racism in our science.

AGU has — and will continue to have — honest conversations about race and privilege so that we keep taking the much-needed actions to foster an inclusive culture and remove systemic racism. As we have repeatedly stated, science and the world is better when we have more diverse voices at the table. Building on the call to action from the [Call for a Robust Anti-Racism Plan for the Geosciences](#) and [No Time for Silence](#) teams, President-elect Susan Lozier and I were proud to release the [eight action steps to address systemic racism](#) that we issued in August. These action steps were only the start of our community's continued commitment to take bold, meaningful actions.

I also had the honor of awarding the [2020 Presidential Citations](#) to the [Call for a Robust Anti-Racism Plan for the Geosciences](#) and [No Time for Silence](#) teams. We are grateful to each member of those teams for their recommendations and their continued dedication to improve our community.

Some additional highlights from 2020:

- Elevated and reaffirmed our [diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives](#).
- Turned [Fall Meeting](#) from a mostly in-person experience to a successful 100% virtual meeting.
- Announced a [new strategic plan](#) that was developed with the phenomenal ideas many of you provided.
- Increased [journal article submissions](#) while maintaining the high-quality standards people expect from AGU.
- Created a book editorial board and released [several open-access books](#).
- Increased student membership by 16% and maintained new/renewed membership numbers.



- Received the American Society of Association Executives ([ASAE](#)) [Power of A award](#) for the second year in a row for the Centennial Grants Project.
- Selected [Randy W. Fiser as the new CEO](#).

AGU also conducted a leadership election, which led to the selection of Lisa Graumlich, a paleoclimatologist and the first openly LGBTQIA+ president-elect. With the selection of Lisa and the rest of the newly elected Board, Council, College of Fellows and section leaders, AGU will have its most diverse leadership during Susan Lozier's term as AGU president in 2021-2022.

I am proud of the work we accomplished in 2020. I also know we have a lot more work to do to create the inclusive scientific culture that we aspire to and wish we had joined when we started our careers. By working together, we will take and achieve the bold, meaningful actions that are needed to build the equitable future we all envision and value. It has been my honor to work with the remarkable AGU staff and the global AGU community. Together they give me hope for the future of our planet.

Regards,

Robin E. Bell

Strategic Plan

AGU's [Board and Council](#), along with input from AGU staff, worked hard this year to formulate a new [strategic plan](#) that sets the vision for the future of Earth and space sciences and our community by accelerating both discovery and solution-based science.

Fundamental to everything AGU does now and reflected in our new strategic plan are our values of integrity, respect, diversity and collaboration as well as education and outreach. These are not new to any of us — the strategic plan cements their importance.

With AGU's new definition, vision and mission, we are expanding our current partnerships to develop ideas, generate research and lead to action.

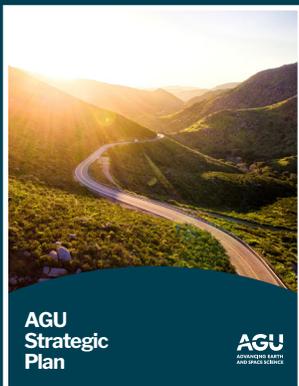
Collectively, AGU has been working through the strategic plan for almost two years. When the Board and Council started, they looked at data and information on the trends in politics, economics and culture. We continued working

internally and externally to solicit ideas and suggestions for the future of our community with member activities, focus groups and surveys. These inputs served as the basis of our four scenarios where we mapped what could happen if the public's levels of trust in science were high or low as well as how science would progress if it was closed and competitive or open and collaborative.

We combined all of this work and shared our drafts at various in-person and virtual gatherings, from Fall Meeting to our Board and Council meetings to spontaneous one-on-one and group discussions and surveys.

[During AGU Fall Meeting 2020, we held a town hall](#) at which AGU President Robin Bell, President-elect Susan Lozier and CEO Randy W. Fiser spoke about the strategic plan and answered members' questions about the vision and future of the organization.

AGU's three strategic goals will help serve as our guiding lights when we navigate these new paths:



[AGU 2020 Strategic Plan](#) →

Catalyze discovery and solutions to scientific and societal challenges



Promote and exemplify an inclusive scientific culture

Partner broadly with other organizations and sectors to effectively address scientific and societal challenges

#AGU20

Although we love seeing AGU members in person, the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic required an immediate shift to a fully virtual Fall Meeting. #AGU20 proved to be the most inclusive meeting ever, attracting more than 25,000 attendees from more than 107 countries.

AGU Fall Meeting 2020 was held over three weeks (1-17 December) with content presented to accommodate multiple time zones for our global attendees. In addition, the travel barrier was removed, allowing for #AGU20 to increase engagement with scientists and students from around the world who had never been able to attend before. AGU also provided free registration to undergraduate AGU members, Indigenous student and faculty members enrolled in or working for North American tribal and territorial colleges and universities as well as those residing in qualifying low-income and lower-middle income countries, as defined by the [World Bank](#). Scientific sessions were available using a mix of prerecorded content and live discussion and Q&A time. Content was also available after Fall Meeting so attendees could view the 2,970 hours of scientific programming at their convenience.

Since #AGU20 was virtual, the [AGU Honors Awards Ceremony](#) was also held online. Every year, we recognize those who have made outstanding contributions in Earth and space sciences through research, education, communication and outreach. We celebrated these individuals in a [video tribute](#). In addition, each winner recorded an [acceptance speech](#).

The AGU Honors and Recognition Committee is proud that we have made progress in increasing the diversity of nominations and winners in all areas. In 2020, we saw improved diversity in gender and career stage:

- Forty-seven percent of the Union Medals, Awards and Prizes (MAP) were awarded to women.
- Thirty-one percent of Union MAP recipients were individuals between the ages of 40 and 49. Twenty-two percent were 65 years old or older, while the age groups 30 to 39 years of age and 50 to 64 years old each had 19% of MAP recipients.



> 25,400 attendees



> 7,750 graduate students

> 1,200 undergraduate students

~200 high school/middle school students

> 8,000 first-time attendees

107 countries represented by attendees

Top 5 countries were U.S. & Canada; U.K. Japan; China; India





NASA/Robert Markowitz

Additional highlights from #AGU20 Fall Meeting included:

- A global **scientific roll call**.
- Keynotes from:
 - **Leland Melvin** — engineer, educator, former NASA astronaut and NFL wide receiver.
 - **Dr. Freeman Hrabowski** — University of Maryland, Baltimore County, president.
 - **Dr. Rita Colwell** — Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland at College Park and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and president of CosmosID.
 - **Dr. Howard Frumkin** — professor emeritus of environmental and occupational health sciences at the University of Washington School of Public Health.
 - **Andrea Wulf** — bestselling author
 - **Dr. Kendall Moore** — author and director of the film series *Can We Talk? Difficult Conversations with Underrepresented People of Color: Sense of Belonging and Obstacles to STEM Fields*.
 - **Dr. John Fitzpatrick** — ornithologist and executive director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
- **Science raps** from freestyle climate rapper Baba Brinkman.

Some of the scientific content is available on the #AGU20 **Fall Meeting playlist** on YouTube. We've also included the #AGU20 press conferences that covered the impacts of COVID-19, drought, climate, wildfires and NASA missions on **YouTube**.

11,870
posters with
~1.1 million views



7,842
sessions, presentations,
workshops or townhalls

2,970
hours of scientific
programming

105
exhibitors & sponsors



392
press registered

14
keynote plenaries



AGU Publications

AGU continued to expand to new audiences through AGU publications with a focus on both discovery and solutions-based science while reaffirming and expanding our support of open science and open data.

AGU received nearly 18,000 submissions from 107 countries in 2020, an increase in submissions of 7.4% from 2019, despite the pandemic. The number of women submitting manuscripts remained close to steady in 2020 with 31% of total submissions, compared with 33% in 2019.

Working with partners in China, AGU has expanded our presence on our [WeChat](#) channel, which has nearly 10,000 followers. We have also created dual-language webinars on how to successfully publish in AGU journals.

[GeoHealth](#), AGU's gold open-access journal covering the increasingly important intersection among the Earth, environmental and health sciences, crossed [several important milestones](#) during the past year, including becoming indexed in PubMed Central, National Library of Medicine and Web of Science, where it received its first [impact factor of 3.66](#).

AGU continued to build on our work with hundreds of repositories, publishers, and other partners across the international data and geoscience community to adopt and implement the Enabling FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) Data [Commitment Statement](#). In 2020, AGU [received funding from the National Science Foundation](#) (NSF) to further FAIR data practices and help ensure that NSF Earth science data are publicly accessible, linked to publications and grants and credited. This work will serve as a model for linking information across funders, data repositories and publishers and improving public access to research outputs, a win for open science and open data.

In addition, AGU has partnered with [Earth Science Information Partners](#) (ESIP), an international community of more than 150 organizations with significant collective data stewardship expertise, to support the goal of helping researchers and authors receive credit for their data and link to their research and funder.

These partnerships will conduct outreach efforts through the AGU/ESIP Data FAIRs, especially the [Data Help Desk](#) at society meetings, and through the ESIP-hosted Coalition for Publishing Data in the Earth and Space Sciences ([COPDESS](#)),



AGU received nearly **18,000** submissions from 107 countries in 2020

2020 submissions increased **7.4%** from 2019



In 2020, women submitted **31%** of total manuscripts

In 2019, women submitted **33%** of total manuscripts



an emerging community space for data repositories and journals to work together. Other partners include [Dryad](#), a not-for-profit multidisciplinary repository that houses research data that do not otherwise have a disciplinary home, and [CHORUS](#), a not-for-profit organization that monitors open access, preservation and compliance to scholarly content and data reporting on funded research.

AGU's books program developed several new initiatives over the past year. The program published a range of new titles across the Earth and space sciences, including the [first open-access books](#). In spring 2020, AGU formed a [new editorial board](#) for the AGU books program that will suggest ideas for new books, assess proposals, provide editorial advice to editors and authors, evaluate completed manuscripts and grow the program.

Eos

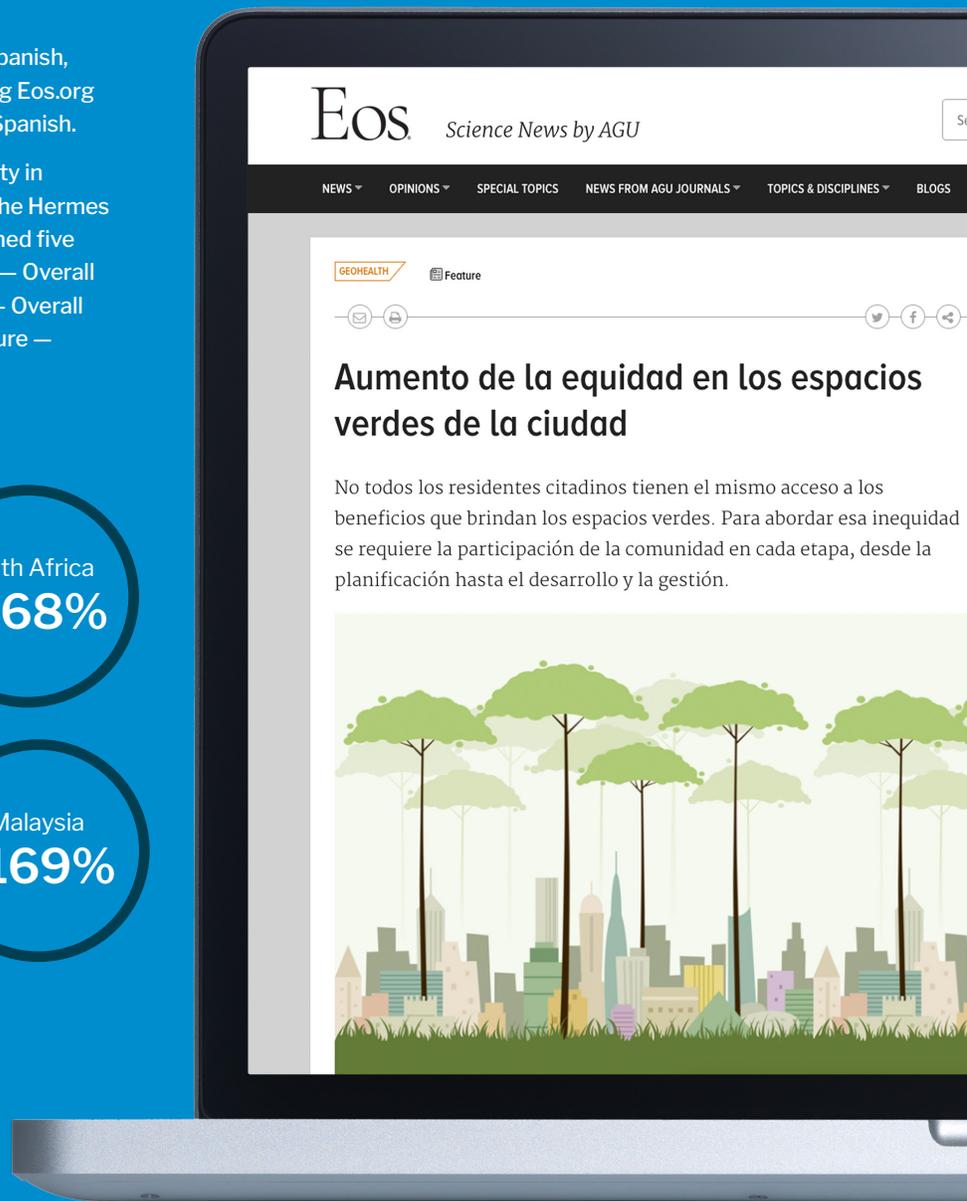
Eos expanded the diversity of authorship in 2020 with 63 news articles reported by writers outside the U.S., Canada and the U.K. and increased the diversity of readership as well, with 40% of overall traffic coming from outside the U.S.

In 2020, Eos.org received 4.2 million page views from 2.7 million users, with 25% of web traffic coming from the 25-34 age group. Overall, Eos.org has seen a 58% year-over-year rise in overall readership.

Eos has also expanded into publishing articles in Spanish, through a partnership with **Planeteando**, increasing Eos.org yearly web traffic 24% from web browsers set to Spanish.

In addition to its strides made in readership diversity in 2020, Eos also won two awards for cover design, the Hermes Creative Award — Gold and **AIGA 50**. Eos also earned five 2020 EXCEL Awards in the categories of Website — Overall Excellence, Website — Editorial Excellence, Print — Overall Excellence, Feature — “**No Place to Flee**” and Feature — “**The Unsolved Mystery of the Earth Blobs**.”

Eos’s web traffic increased in 2020 across Asia and Africa:



Science in our Communities

In line with the goals of the [AGU strategic plan](#), our programs have put the strategic goals into practice through a focus on solutions-based science and community science as well as reaching out to new partners to address societal challenges.

- In 2020, AGU partnered with the World Health Organization and the World Meteorological Organization for the [Climatological, Meteorological and Environmental factors in the COVID-19 pandemic](#) symposium in August. This meeting brought together scientists and policymakers from around the globe, focused on sharing knowledge about the COVID-19 pandemic and resulted in an [outcome statement](#) with recommendations for future research.
- The Thriving Earth Exchange launched 32 new community projects and completed 13. Forty-four Thriving Earth Exchange Fellows logged 1,322 volunteer hours in support of community science programs. Since the founding of Thriving Earth Exchange in 2013, [the program has helped 394 community leaders](#) across 10 countries, 40 states and 137 cities and regions to engage with 325 scientists to help with issues in their communities.
- The Sharing Science program at AGU piloted a webinar series in 2020, accompanied by animations, as well as the launch of a [Virtual Learning Hub](#), where webinar attendees and scientists can find fun demonstrations of ways to better share their science with the nonscientific audience, including lawmakers and the general public. In addition, the Sharing Science team built a new virtual model for workshops, ensuring that their work could continue throughout the pandemic. They conducted 31 training sessions, including workshops and webinars, engaging with more than 2,300 attendees.
- To combat the statistic that only 34% of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) students voted in the 2018 United States election and to help protect science, AGU created the [Science Votes the Future](#) campaign. This campaign sent state-specific information to members during the primaries, with information and deadlines about registering to vote in their state, as well as tips on how to speak to legislators to ensure that science would be a priority in the 2020 election.
- AGU hosted its first Virtual Advocacy Days workshop, which trained more than 50 scientists on how to effectively speak with members of Congress about diversity, equity and inclusion (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](#).

- AGU released several statements in response to legislation and policies put forth by the Trump administration that would adversely affect science and the integrity of the scientific process, including:
 - [Urging congress to take additional steps to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19](#) and ensure the strength of the scientific enterprise.
 - [Opposing a 6 July ruling](#) by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement [Student and Exchange Visitor Program](#) (SEVP) requiring those studying in the U.S. on visas (F-1 and M-1) to be enrolled with in-person classes or risk deportation.
 - [Demanding that the administration revoke the appointment of David Legates](#) because he questioned the severity of human-caused climate change, as deputy assistant secretary of commerce for observation and prediction at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Promoting Science

AGU continues to be a voice not just for the geosciences community, but for science and scientists in general. To continue to advocate for science, we have sought to expand our reach outside of the usual AGU ecosystem.

In 2020, 15 AGU staff and Board members took on this challenge, speaking on 36 separate panels to a variety of new audiences, including high school students, university boards and nonprofits.

Over the past year, AGU has worked hard to keep science in the news, with 26.6 million impressions on social media channels and 24,000+ mentions about AGU and our programs and publications (i.e., journals and books) in the media. The top outlets include *National Geographic*, *Scientific American*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Wired* and *Gizmodo*.

In addition to traditional press coverage, AGU significantly grew its social media accounts, with LinkedIn followers increasing 92%, YouTube increasing 67% and Instagram increasing 65% over the 2019 numbers. These increases give AGU content an even broader reach to engage with new audiences.



AGU Traditional Media:

24,000+
mentions



AGU Social Media in 2020:



26.6 million
Impressions on social
media channels

65%
Increase in LinkedIn
followers



67%
Increase in YouTube
followers

65%
Increase in Instagram
followers



Promoting Diversity

In 2020, AGU furthered its commitment to combat systemic racism in the geosciences through a number of actions and new programs, among them expanding funding for AGU's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts and committing to improving the diversity in AGU's governance, committees and Honors program.

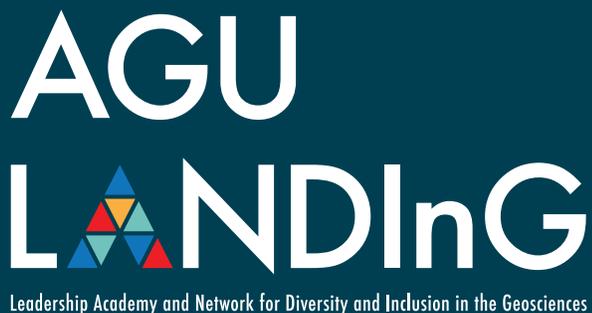
The eight decisive actions are our initial tangible steps toward creating a more equitable community. We will show our progress by creating a DEI dashboard, which will be available in Q2 2021, to indicate the opportunities for improvement and gains across AGU.

AGU President Robin Bell and AGU Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee Chair Lisa White penned an op-ed in *Scientific American* about why more diverse and inclusive voices must be involved in the geosciences, as well as an article in *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* about the need to create new rules and develop a system that is fair and just for everyone.

With a grant from the National Science Foundation, AGU LANDInG (Leadership Academy and Network for Diversity and Inclusion in the Geosciences-Research Coordination Network) was launched as a new DEI academy for the geosciences that will spark the culture shift needed to develop an equitable, inclusive and welcoming environment. It will also help establish and support a DEI community of practice.

In solidarity with Geoscientists of Color, AGU signed on to a statement and call to action on confronting racism in STEM. AGU President Robin Bell awarded the 2020 Presidential Citations to the two teams that created the "Call for a Robust Anti-Racism Plan for the Geosciences" and "No Time for Silence." The first team was led by Dr. Hendratta Ali, associate professor, geosciences, Fort Hays State University, Geolatinas adviser. The latter was led by Dr. Vernon Morris, member of AGU's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, professor of chemistry and environmental sciences and director, School of Mathematical and Natural Sciences in the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, Arizona State University, and emeritus professor, Atmospheric Sciences Program, Howard University. Their words served as the framing documents for change from institutions of all sizes around the world. This includes AGU, where we committed to the eight decisive actions, mentioned above, to change and improve the scientific enterprise.

AGU's Bridge Program, which partners with academic institutions across the U.S. to recruit and retain underrepresented students who are applying to geoscience graduate schools, welcomed the first student applicants in 2020. We were pleased to have 68 universities applying to be a part of the program this year, with 45 first-time applicants and 23 reapplying partners.



AGU Building Update

The AGU headquarters is almost finished! The major work has been completed, including the addition of roof solar panels. The scaffolding has been removed, sidewalks have been replaced and the building will be open to the public as soon as it is safe to do so. Once fully open, AGU will make building data available for others to use and review.

Janice Lachance, executive vice president, Strategic Leadership and Global Outreach, has been promoting the building's net zero energy renovation around the world as a conference speaker and in media interviews, including at the U.S. Green Building Council Montgomery County Energy Summit in an education session titled "[A Net Zero Retrofit Idea Exchange: From Scientific Inception to Construction.](#)"

The AGU headquarters has also been featured in a number of publications, including [Focus Technica](#), which noted the building as "one of the city's remarkable sites for transformative energy management"; the [Washington City Paper](#), which highlighted the AGU HQ's role in helping Washington, D.C., meet its ambitious solar energy goals; and the prominent Washington, D.C., blog [Greater Greater Washington](#), which highlighted the AGU HQ as one of the buildings leading the way on climate change.



Supporting the Future of Science

It is crucial to support the next generation of Earth and space scientists for the betterment of our planet, our science and our communities.

In 2020, thanks to our generous AGU community donors, AGU awarded 222 student members with Fall Meeting Virtual Student Travel Grants, including 34 members of the second cohort of recipients funded through the Austin Endowment for Student Travel. Of the awardees, 113 hailed from outside the U.S., 106 identified as women, and 24 were from minority groups underrepresented in the Earth and space sciences. Additionally, AGU awarded 30 students and early career professionals with Fall Meeting Virtual Berkner Travel Fellowships. Because of the restricted travel due to the pandemic, recipients of these awards received two payments of funds — one to cover costs associated with attending a virtual meeting and one to cover educational expenses.

222
student members
awarded



113
hailed from outside
the U.S.



2020 Donors

AGU gratefully acknowledges the donors, members and friends who supported AGU's programs and initiatives in 2020.

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

(\$250+ cumulative annual giving)

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Caltech Graduate Student Council Diversity Committee	Hazelyn and Harrold McComas Charitable Trust	Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz International Prize for Water	USGS Office of International Programs (USGS OIP)
Carnegie Corporation of New York	The Kavli Foundation	The Ramanathan Family Trust	Vanguard Charitable Trust
Cell Press	Leidos	Raytheon Technologies	Wiley
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Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science, Inc.	McEntee Charitable Fund	Seller-Lehrer Family Foundation	
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Financial Summary 2020

To demonstrate AGU's commitment to our strategic plan and its goals to catalyze discovery and solutions to scientific challenges, promote an inclusive scientific culture and partner with other organizations to address societal challenges, we used funds raised throughout the year to support programs and initiatives, including:

- \$296,000 to support the next generation of scientists through 252 enhanced Annual Grants:
 - 188 Travel Grants, 34 Austin Student Travel Grants and 30 Berkner Travel Fellowships for #AGU20 that were used for everything from technology needs (e.g., computers and Wi-Fi) to childcare to educational expenses (e.g., tuition and books).
 - Almost 37.7 percent of the awardees were first-time Fall Meeting attendees and 51 percent of awardees were from locations outside the U.S.
- \$586,889 supported the Thriving Earth Exchange and AGU's commitment to community science with the completion of 13 projects and the launch of 32 new projects.
- \$934,525 supported AGU's DE&I programs, such as:
 - AGU Bridge program, focused on helping underrepresented communities obtain graduate degrees in the geosciences, received 68 partner university applications to be a part of the program, with 45 first-time applicants and 23 reapplying partners.
 - AGU's [Mentoring 365](#) program, a virtual program developed among Earth and space sciences organizations, added 283 new participants in 2020. Of those 41% of users are from outside the U.S., 28% were first generation students, 10% identify as LGBTQ and 4% identify as having a disability.
 - AGU LANDInG, a professional development program for current and aspiring DEI leaders in the geosciences.
 - It was also partially funded with a grant from NSF.
 - [Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee](#) that facilitates the steps AGU staff and members should take across all AGU programs to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the [AGU Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan](#), were key to developing AGU's new [DEI Dashboard](#) that will be released annually.

Financial Summary 2020

Statements of Financial Position

31 December	2020		2019	
Assets				
Cash and cash equivalents	\$	6,257,657	\$	14,556,846
Investments		121,485,268		116,586,295
Receivables, net		2,923,964		3,305,274
Prepaid expenses and other assets		1,935,158		1,889,094
Property and equipment, net		53,496,822		46,607,238
Total assets	\$	186,098,869	\$	182,944,747
Liabilities and net assets				
Liabilities				
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$	7,107,864	\$	11,507,551
Line of credit		7,688,999		
Deferred revenue		2,070,271		3,598,836
Postretirement health benefits		2,598,850		3,498,198
Bonds payable, net		42,234,524		42,694,605
Total liabilities		61,700,508		61,299,190
Net assets				
Without donor restrictions:				
Undesignated	\$	70,077,015	\$	71,978,347
Designated		41,751,175		38,648,944
Total net assets without donor restrictions		111,828,190		110,627,291
With donor restrictions		12,570,171		11,018,266
Total net assets		124,398,361		121,645,557
Total liabilities and net assets	\$	186,098,869	\$	182,944,747

Financial Summary 2020

Statements of Activities

31 December	2020	2019
Activities without donor restrictions		
Revenue and support		
Publications	\$ 17,506,884	\$ 17,366,841
Meetings	9,575,564	15,956,007
Member dues	1,566,584	1,990,471
Grants and contracts	897,057	653,362
Rentals	644,594	314,290
Other	356,923	89,075
Net assets released from restrictions	326,118	312,619
Contributions	155,999	93,273
Sponsorships	95,300	308,850
Total revenue and support without donor restrictions	31,125,023	37,084,788
Expenses		
Program services		
Meetings	9,564,846	12,215,923
Marketing, communication, and digital media	10,070,965	11,701,977
Publications	12,437,087	11,347,380
Science and talent pool	3,740,488	5,086,082
Memberships	1,185,815	1,261,159
Total program services	36,999,201	41,612,521
Supporting services		
Fundraising and development	864,351	988,794
General and administration	4,009,735	5,551,342
Total supporting services	4,874,086	6,540,136
Total expenses	\$ 41,873,287	\$ 48,152,657
Change in net assets from operations	(10,748,264)	(11,067,869)
Investment income (loss)	11,002,897	17,643,371
Net periodic benefit cost other than service cost	(156,236)	(233,048)
Other defined benefit and postretirement benefit changes	1,102,502	218,690
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	1,200,899	6,561,144
Activities with donor restrictions		
Investment income (loss)	1,299,933	1,526,796
Contributions	578,090	1,161,896
Net assets released from restrictions	(326,118)	(312,619)
Change in net assets with donor restrictions	1,551,905	2,376,073
Change in net assets	2,752,804	8,937,217
Net assets, beginning of year	121,645,557	112,708,340
Net assets, end of year	\$ 124,398,361	\$ 121,645,557



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