

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



AGU
100
ADVANCING EARTH
AND SPACE SCIENCE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Letter from the President	→
6	Strategic Goals	→
7	Financial Summary	→
10	Supporting the Next 100 Years	→



■ LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

AGU celebrated several milestones in 2018. At Fall Meeting 2018 in December, we kicked off our Centennial celebration, the culmination of careful planning for both a retrospective review of accomplishments in the Earth and space sciences over the past 100 years and an articulation of visions for what we can accomplish in the coming century. The Centennial sessions at the 2018 meeting were forward looking, and I look forward to much more exciting science to come.

Fall Meeting 2018 also provided an opportunity to open and celebrate our building, which is the first net zero energy renovation of a commercial building in the District of Columbia. It sets a high, but clearly achievable bar for every business, organization, office, and residence to contribute to urgently decarbonizing our society. The building is complex, tapping into the D.C. sewer system to capture usable energy, harvesting electrons with solar panels while minimizing energy loads through numerous interlinked, innovative systems. This is not unlike the complexity and wonderment of the Earth systems that AGU scientists study every day. As a biogeochemist, I am particularly pleased to see the building's green wall, not only because the living plants are attractive but also to demonstrate how life helps regulate the climate of the building through evapotranspiration, just as it does around the Earth. We have reused, recycled, and repurposed materials from the old building and been cognizant of embedded energy and other resources of the new construction materials and furniture, thus further minimizing our environmental footprint and mimicking the recycling of energy and matter in the Earth system.

To enhance and expand the work of our 60,000 member scientists, we continued to move forward with our findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR) data initiative to ensure that data, physical samples, and software are treated as first-class research products for new research opportunities. A substantial grant from the National Science



Eric Davidson
President, AGU

Foundation (NSF) enabled us to plan for additional programming at Fall Meeting to help members and our sister scientific societies continue to make their own research and data FAIR. We also announced the advent of *AGU Advances*, a cross-disciplinary, gold open-access journal publishing full-length, high-impact research articles across all the Earth and space sciences.

AGU made strides to increase awareness of the pivotal role the Earth and space sciences play in the policy and public awareness arenas. We made recommendations about the importance of basic research that were incorporated into the U.S. House of Representatives' version of the Space Weather Research and Forecasting Act, and we endorsed the Hidden Figures Congressional Gold Medal Act in honor of the NASA scientists featured in the movie *Hidden Figures*. AGU also issued more than 14 public statements addressing policy-related issues, including the dismantling of Puerto Rico's statistics agency, to tackling harassment in the sciences, to the need for more solidarity among scientists in the wake of increasing global nationalism. At the same time, AGU expanded its new Voices for Science program, a hands-on grassroots engagement program that provides scientists with training and tools to help them and their colleagues communicate the value and impact of Earth and space science to key policymakers, journalists, and public audiences. And our Thriving Earth Exchange program brought together AGU scientists and communities for a total of 78 projects across the globe.

To further expand and engage Earth and space scientists at all stages of their careers, the recently formed College of Fellows mentoring program was expanded and is fully subscribed with six mentoring circles meeting monthly. Mentoring365 continues to grow, with half its participants coming from outside the United States. AGU was also awarded a five-year grant as part of an NSF Inclusion Across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science (INCLUDES) Alliances program to support and promote inclusive practices for graduate education and admissions in the physical sciences.

We are now implementing and enforcing a new ethics policy which includes, among other things, expanding the definition of scientific misconduct to include harassment. Our new ethics policy has become a model that is being adopted by scientific societies, universities, and institutions across the country and around the world. This year, AGU continued to prioritize gender and bias studies in our publications and meetings, and AGU partnered with other scientific societies to lead a coalition to address harassment in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). At the Japan Geoscience Union (JpGU) meeting, AGU, along with colleagues at JpGU and the European Geosciences Union, convened a joint session on ethics and harassment and another joint session focused on open data.



As mentioned above, Fall Meeting 2018 was extraordinary in many ways. This year, more than 28,000 people came to the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C., for the meeting—the largest Fall Meeting attendance ever. The number of abstracts presented at the meeting was 17% higher than in 2017, setting a record with 26,063 total submissions, of which 35% of the unique authors were students. AGU leadership – in partnership with the Chinese Academy of sciences – also co-convened an atmospheric PM2.5 conference in China; convened Chapman Conferences in Chile (“Merging Geophysical, Petrochronologic, and Modeling Perspectives to Understand Large Silicic Magma Systems”), Portugal (“Particle Dynamics in the Earth’s Radiation Belts”), Canary Islands (“Stratospheric Aerosol in the Post-Pinatubo Era: Processes, Interactions, and Importance”), and Washington, D.C. (“Hydrologic Research in the Congo Basin”) with the explicit purpose of significantly advancing Earth and space scientific research; and took part in the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco.

In summary, we are pushing the envelope for building design, data policy, ethics policy, innovation in meetings and publications, early-career mentoring, and community engagement. At the same time, we are giving Voices to Science, we March for Science, and we are collecting and curating narratives of AGU’s accomplishments over the past 100 years and our vision for what scientific discovery can reveal and enable for the next 100 years.

When I assumed the role as president of AGU in January 2017, our members and, indeed, the whole world were wondering how the results of the 2016 U.S. presidential election would play out in terms of support for science and the application of science to inform policy. As I end my term, I am proud to say that AGU has been a strong and effective proponent for science in this unsettled time. I was honored to help chart the direction of the organization through a period of needed reflection and innovation. The global problems that we face require an “all hands-on deck” approach that engages the talents of our members as we strive to promote discovery and to create a more sustainable future for all. I am proud to have led an organization that is rising to this challenge. Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

Eric Davidson
President, AGU



Mission

The purpose of AGU is to promote discovery in Earth and space science for the benefit of humanity.

Vision

AGU galvanizes a community of Earth and space scientists that collaboratively advances and communicates science and its power to ensure a sustainable future.

Strategic Goals

Scientific Leadership and Collaboration

AGU is a leader, collaborator, and sought-after partner for scientific innovation, rigor, and interdisciplinary focus on global issues.

Science and Society

AGU engages members, shapes policy, and informs society about the excitement of Earth and space science and its role in developing solutions for the sustainability of the planet.

Talent Pool

The AGU community cultivates and sustains a diverse, inclusive, and dynamic Earth and space science talent pool.

Organizational Excellence

As a scientific society, AGU operates within a new business model that is sustainable, transparent, and inclusive in ways that are responsive to members and stakeholders.



■ FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2018

AGU completed its fiscal year on 31 December 2018. Tate & Tryon conducted the 2018 audit and gave AGU an unqualified opinion, indicating that AGU's financial statements fairly represented the organization's financial position and were in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Assets and liabilities were in balance on 31 December 2018 at \$165.1 million, which equates to an increase of approximately 4.5% over 2017. AGU showed a negative change in net assets of \$11.0 million for the fiscal year. The investments in our strategic initiatives and the effect of market conditions on the investment portfolio were the primary causes of the decrease. The strategic initiatives are focused on AGU's continued improvements in products, services, and information offered to members and society. AGU continued to implement new technology and improved business processes during the year to meet these goals.

To fund strategic initiatives in support of AGU's mission and to protect against business disruptions, AGU held financial reserves of over \$110.9 million at year's end. AGU's investment portfolio is continually monitored to ensure that appropriate levels of safeguards and risks are in place to take full advantage of the market and to meet the long-term needs of the organization. The organization's 2018 financial reserves decreased by \$6.4 million.

Revenues from membership, publications, and meetings were used to support the AGU mission of promoting discovery in Earth and space science for the benefit of humanity through programs focusing on scientific leadership and collaboration, science and society, talent pool enhancement, and organizational excellence. In addition, AGU staff are actively engaged in the development of new member, business, and societal opportunities that will support the mission, vision, and future needs of the organization.

AGU leadership and management remain mindful of the changing U.S. and world economies and their impact on AGU and its members and are prepared to modify the fiscal strategies of the organization to meet changing needs of the membership.

Statements of Financial Position

31 December	2018	2017
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 9,205,103	\$ 10,331,890
Investments	110,855,975	110,646,075
Receivables, net	3,193,146	14,223,264
Prepaid expenses and other assets	1,434,897	1,401,178
Property and equipment, net	40,431,279	21,416,401
Total assets	\$ 165,120,400	\$ 158,018,808
Liabilities and net assets		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	8,272,904	7,011,990
Deferred revenue	987,418	2,705,069
Postretirement health benefits	3,549,682	3,702,247
Security deposits	—	2,000
Bonds payable, net	39,602,056	20,892,043
Total liabilities	52,412,060	34,313,349
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions:		
Undesignated	63,276,541	73,683,531
Designated	40,789,606	41,179,779
Total net assets without donor restrictions	104,066,147	114,863,310
With donor restrictions	8,642,193	8,842,149
Total net assets	112,708,340	123,705,459
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 165,120,400	\$ 158,018,808

Statements of Activities

31 December	2018	2017
Activities without donor restrictions		
Revenue and support		
Publications	\$ 17,226,095	\$ 40,982,114
Meetings	17,949,033	11,735,224
Member dues	1,938,706	1,940,334
Grants and contracts	783,916	501,552
Contributions	373,070	229,366
Other	47,131	56,575
Net assets released from restrictions	362,795	413,235
Total revenue and support without donor restrictions	38,680,746	55,858,400
Expenses		
Program services		
Meetings	14,537,759	10,400,537
Marketing, communication, and digital media	10,015,503	8,063,260
Publications	6,521,775	6,114,154
Science and talent pool	4,530,094	4,245,972
Memberships	1,257,949	844,888
Total program services	38,168,753	29,668,811
Supporting services		
Fundraising and development	1,288,686	1,894,570
General and administration	3,012,665	2,550,142
Building	1,336,270	1,965,786
Total supporting services	5,637,621	6,410,498
Total expenses	\$ 43,806,374	\$ 36,079,309
Change in net assets from operations	(5,125,628)	19,779,091
Investment return	(5,824,100)	13,779,213
Net gain on interest rate collar	—	18,006
Postretirement health benefit credit (expense)	152,565	(335,954)
Change in net assets without donor restrictions	(10,797,163)	33,240,356
Activities with donor restrictions		
Investment return	(565,039)	1,164,104
Contributions	727,878	239,262
Net assets released from restrictions	(362,795)	(413,235)
Change in net assets with donor restrictions	(199,956)	990,131
Change in net assets	(10,997,119)	34,230,487
Net assets, beginning of year	123,705,459	89,474,972
Net assets, end of year	\$ 112,708,340	\$ 123,705,459



SUPPORTING THE NEXT 100 YEARS

AGU's donors make up an engaged and thoughtful segment of the community whose commitment allows our mission and vision to thrive year after year. In 2018, AGU donors created unique new opportunities for AGU's members, such as the Austin Student Travel Grant Challenge, the Future Horizons in Climate Science Lecture, and joint projects advancing exoplanet science.

Thank you to all AGU's 2018 donors and partners.

Many Members, One Goal: The Austin Student Travel Grant Challenge

In 2018, Jamie Austin, a volunteer leader and longtime member, presented the AGU community with a historic opportunity to create an endowment in support of Student Travel Grants through the Austin Student Travel Grant Challenge. Dr. Austin has pledged to match all donations up to \$1 million through the end of 2019. If fully funded, this endowment will allow approximately 90 more students to attend Fall Meeting each year—boosting the annual number of Student Travel Grant awardees by nearly 40%.

As humanity and the planet face ever more daunting challenges, science is under attack, and facts are shrugged off, the evidence-based solutions that the geosciences provide are now more important than ever. For many AGU members, attending a Fall Meeting is a transformative experience that builds confidence, grows perspective, forges a new network of scientific peers, and feeds the talent pipeline to help solve the questions of our time. Student Travel Grants are an investment in the future of the Earth and space sciences and in undergraduate and Ph.D. students from around the world by helping to defray the costs of presenting their science to the AGU community.



"Over the years I didn't have the opportunity [to present my science] because there was no access to funding. I always thought there was no point in applying. You don't know how excited I am to be able to present at AGU. It's a dream come true."

—**Busayo Oreoluwa Omisore**
China University of Geosciences, Beijing

Since the announcement of the challenge in 2018, AGU has engaged voices from across our AGU community—including members, donors, senior scientists, students, past student travel grant recipients, and early-career scientists—by collecting their stories about AGU Fall Meeting and its role in helping advance their careers through the presentation of their original research, sharing ideas, and by networking with colleagues from around the world, listening to keynote presentations by leaders in the Earth and space sciences, and gaining new skills through Fall Meeting specific programming and instruction.

We hope that you will continue to support the Austin Endowment for Student Travel throughout 2019 and follow along as the AGU community invests in and celebrates the impact of the Student Travel Grant program.

Please convey your passion for supporting students as they attend their first AGU Fall Meeting with others in your community by sharing information about Jamie Austin's commitment and the challenge with five or more of your colleagues and friends. Use this link to read more and share with others: agu.org/Austin.



"I realized I was interested in science communication, a perspective I gained from the AGU Fall Meeting. This was a perspective I wasn't getting in my classes. My main takeaway was that there are different ways to be involved in science and different ways to support science."

—Danya Abdelhameid
College of William and Mary, Virginia



"To me, the student travel grant was an opportunity. It was a chance to learn more about science communication and to explore which career paths I might want to pursue."

—Lara Patricia Sotto
University of the Philippines, Manila

Harnessing the Future of Climate Science at Fall Meeting

The first Future Horizons in Climate Science: Turco Lectureship was presented at AGU Fall Meeting 2018 in Washington, D.C. The first lecture was presented by Jennifer E. Kay of the University of Colorado Boulder. Prof. Kay researches climate variability and change, with a specific focus on connecting atmospheric and oceanic circulations with cloud, precipitation, and sea ice processes.

The Future Horizons in Climate Science Lecture was established through a generous gift from AGU donors Richard P. and Linda S. Turco. The lecture highlights important research on climate change by recognized leaders in the field. Positioned to be forward looking, each lecture will identify future areas of research that will ultimately engage and bring together new and established scientific talent to address the challenges of global climate change and related issues. Lecture topics will represent all fields relevant to climate systems, spanning global and macro scales as well as microscopic processes. Lecturers are encouraged to raise significant implications for climate-related policy and implementation of an expanding base of knowledge on climate processes, change, and manipulation.



Jennifer E. Kay

Department of Atmospheric and
Oceanic Sciences at University of
Colorado Boulder



AGU and AAS Awarded Joint Grant from the Kavli Foundation to Foster Understanding of Exoplanets in 2018 and 2019

AGU and the American Astronomical Society (AAS) have received a grant from the Kavli Foundation to advance exoplanet science. This cooperative effort will help integrate the work of AGU's and AAS's scientific communities through a joint steering committee, special sessions at both societies' annual meetings, and topical conferences and workshops.

More than 3,000 exoplanets have been identified in more than 2,000 planetary systems beyond our own. Their sizes, compositions, and dynamics are surprisingly diverse. Several dozen systems have multiple planets in the "habitable zone," where liquid water may exist on their surfaces. Exoplanet observations have been a primary focus of the international astronomical community, and the growing amount of data on exoplanetary systems is providing important inputs to our understanding of the formation and evolution of our own solar system.

"We are excited to join with our AAS colleagues to accelerate the exploration of this rapidly evolving field of space science. Thanks to this generous grant from the Kavli Foundation, this unique cooperative effort between our two scientific societies will help bring together and strengthen bonds between the best researchers in the science of exoplanet research," said Chris McEntee, AGU CEO/executive director.

"It is remarkable that only 2 decades after the first exoplanets were discovered, we are probing the physical characteristics, atmospheric chemistry, and rotational and orbital dynamics of thousands of such objects," said Kevin B. Marvel, AAS executive officer. "Only with a coordinated interdisciplinary approach will astronomers, planetary scientists, and geophysicists be able to maintain this blistering pace of discovery, and thanks to the Kavli Foundation, AGU and AAS will lead the way."

"With AGU and AAS working together, the very best scientists from the geosciences and astrophysics will be able to work together to enable the growth of the increasingly interdisciplinary field of exoplanetary research. We are proud to be able to support this exciting joint effort and look forward to an ever increasing pace of discovery," said Chris Martin, interim vice president for science at the Kavli Foundation.

The Kavli Foundation grant will help enhance exoplanet science by bringing together the relevant researchers via the following initiatives:

- Establishment of a steering committee composed of key leaders and researchers from each organization





- Session presentations at AGU Fall Meeting 2018 and AAS's winter 2019 meeting featuring talks on the state of exoplanet science, the dynamical evolution of our solar system, and our changing understanding of planetary interiors and atmospheres
- Travel support for six to eight invited speakers to attend each of the annual meetings
- An exoplanet conference and workshop to be convened by AAS in August 2019 in Reykjavík, Iceland, resulting in the publication of integrated special issues and themes in AGU and AAS journals (Follow-up presentations will occur at AGU Fall Meeting 2019 and AAS's winter 2020 meeting.)
- A summer 2019 NASA/AGU/AAS Astrobiology Science Conference to help advance interaction between federal science agencies and scientific societies
- Other joint projects as they are identified

This collaborative effort will further catalyze exoplanet science by integrating the expertise of the two societies' shared communities more closely in the coming years. Furthermore, with the resources provided by the Kavli Foundation, AGU, and AAS will leverage the interdisciplinary science that is already occurring within the geophysical and astronomical communities. Together, the two organizations represent and are capable of bringing together the relevant researchers from around the world.



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2000 Florida Avenue, N.W. | Washington, D.C. 20009

phone: +1 202.462.6900 | www.agu.org