

# ASGSR NEWSLETTER

☀️ MARCH 2026 🌅 VERNAL EQUINOX ISSUE



## 1. Message from Leadership

Wow! ASGSR is really growing. Looking back at how far we've come, it's clear to see, the field of gravitational and space research has evolved dramatically over the past several decades. When ASGSR was founded, opportunities to conduct spaceflight research were limited and the community was relatively small. What began as a specialized research niche has grown into a vibrant, multidisciplinary field spanning biology, physics, technology, engineering, and the emerging commercial space sector. Today, researchers conduct experiments across a growing range of platforms, including the International Space Station and—soon—onboard emerging commercial space stations; and the field continues to change and expand as we look towards establishing a more permanent presence in deep space. Alongside this growth, ASGSR has expanded its role as a forum for scientific exchange, collaboration, and mentorship to the next generation.

Yes, our Society is really growing! We're stepping up to the growing opportunities for gravitational and space research; but we are also growing to meet the challenges we naturally face, as a vibrant and expanding community. This month, and in the months ahead, you'll see new initiatives, partnerships and efforts we're making, as a Society, to raise our voices for advocacy and increase support for our Members and our community. Your energy, your passion, your input and your engagement are driving our growth, and driving ASGSR to grow with you. Together, thanks to all your involvement, we're increasing our voices and impact. Please watch for announcements from our ASGSR leadership, calling on you to volunteer and get involved. ***We need your help***, so, come grow with us.

## 2. Conference Planning

The Conference Planning Committee has officially kicked off preparations for the [2026 ASGSR Annual Conference](#). The Crystal Gateway Marriott venue in Arlington, VA (just outside of Washington, DC) is secured, and offers expanded space for technical sessions, student events, sponsor and exhibitor showcases, and informal collaboration. This year's meeting will highlight the strong science of the ASGSR community through an increased emphasis on talks, plenaries, and well-organized technical sessions. Key dates have been moved earlier to streamline planning, including an anticipated **April 1 call for abstracts** and a June 1 draft high-level program launch. You can view the planning timeline at <https://asqsr.org/42nd-annual-asqsr-pre-conference-schedule/>.

To accommodate the expanded programming, this year's conference will span three and a half days, with additional breaks and a structure designed to support meaningful exchange of ideas. The planning committee is actively pursuing high-profile keynote speakers, enhancing sponsor engagement, and exploring a new science-focused symposium that showcases the breadth and quality of research across ASGSR. In celebration of the ASGSR Student Board's 25th anniversary, we are developing expanded student activities including a dedicated student lounge, a consolidated Three-Minute Thesis competition, and STEM Day on the final day of the meeting for our High School and Middle School attendees. A preliminary agenda will be posted on the conference website later this spring and will be updated as details are finalized.

To support these goals, a new committee has been formed to oversee abstract review and organization for both technical and poster sessions, improving consistency, clarity, and the overall participant experience. If you are interested in volunteering for the Abstract Organization Committee (AOC), please email Amber Paul (<mailto:paula6@erau.edu>) or Liz Blaber ([blabee@rpi.edu](mailto:blabee@rpi.edu)).

Make sure to watch the conference [website](#) over the coming months for more information.



### 3. News and Special Announcements

In case you missed it, the Governing Board recently approved two updates to our membership structure, including adding a new affiliate membership category to better serve our middle and high school community and an adjustment to dues rates. Read more at <https://asgsr.org/member/>. The changes will take effect on July 1, 2026.

### 4. Advocacy for Our Community

ASGSR recently joined the Commercial Space Federation (CSF) as an Associate Member and will be part of the Commercial Low-Earth Orbit Council. Membership in CSF provides a new advocacy pathway for our community to share the importance of microgravity research and maintain awareness of potential changes that will impact our community. Learn more about CSF at <https://commercialspace.org/>.

### 5. Upcoming Events and Calls to Action

- The **National Academies' Space Science Week**, including the Committee on Biological and Physical Sciences in Space (CBPSS) spring meeting, will be held March 23 - 27, 2026. Visit <https://www.nationalacademies.org/events/430> for more information and to register to attend.
- Interested in supporting the **2026 ASGSR Annual Conference**? The next meeting for the Conference Planning Committee (CPC) will be on Friday, March 27, at Noon PST. Please reach out to [meetings@asgsr.org](mailto:meetings@asgsr.org) with questions or to express your interest in joining. If you are interested in volunteering for the Abstract Organization Committee (AOC), please email Amber Paul ([paula6@erau.edu](mailto:paula6@erau.edu)) or Liz Blaber ([blabee@rpi.edu](mailto:blabee@rpi.edu)).
- Watch for an email, coming soon, from ASGSR with additional details and a call for nominations to join the inaugural **Gravitational and Space Research – Technical Analysis Group (GSR-TAG)**.

***We need your support and engagement!***

### 6. Student Corner



**Space Plant Biology: Enabling Growth Without Gravity**

**Dr. John Z. Kiss**  
Professor, College of Engineering and Science  
Provost, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Florida Institute of Technology

**March 19, 2026**  
**9:30am ET**

**ASGSR**  
Students

On March 19, 2026 at 9:30am ET, students are invited to join Dr. John Z. Kiss for a discussion on “Space Plant Biology: Enabling Growth Without Gravity.” To participate, visit <https://www.addevent.com/event/f227xvl34tws>.



### 7. A Moment in History

Our Society was founded in 1984, forty-two years ago, and nearly every year—without fail—we have come together to share scientific results, introduce new advancements in space technology, contribute to NASA’s space exploration and research objectives and inspire the next generation of space explorers. Whether you’re new to ASGSR, or you’ve been part of our community for many years, you might have wondered things like: when and where was the first ASGSR meeting? Has ASGSR ever met in my city? Have we met outside the United States? Was there ever a year we didn’t meet in-person? And you also may have wondered what the news and the science was all about, during our conferences-past. **Now, you can see where we’ve been, and where we’re going next with the [ASGSR Conferences Current & Past](#)**, interactive map feature on our website. The map can be found on our [Conference Archive](#) link, under the Conferences drop-down menu, or under the [ASGSR History](#) link, under the About drop-down menu. The interactive map currently shows the dates, locations and other information we’ve collected from all our past meetings; but it’s a work-in-progress. If you would like to see information posted at the links to our past conference, or if you have some information you’d like to contribute, please reach out to our current ASGSR history-buff, [Jeff.Smith@asgsr.org](mailto:Jeff.Smith@asgsr.org).

