

ASGSR NEWSLETTER

May 2026



1. Message from Leadership

The season of ASGSR Advocacy is upon us. This week, our ASGSR Board and members of our Student Board and External Affairs Committee descended on Capitol Hill to advocate for the gravitational and space research, technology development, and spaceflight missions supported by [NASA's Biological and Physical Sciences \(BPS\) Division](#). This year's message focused on Exploration Science and how the high priority research and initiatives outlined in the [National Academy's Decadal Survey on Biological and Physical Sciences Research in Space](#) align with, and support, the President's [Executive Order 14369: Ensuring American Space Superiority December 18, 2025](#), and [NASA's Ignition Events](#) to focus human and robotic missions beyond Low Earth Orbit toward the development of a [Moon Base](#), with the goals to support a continuous human presence on the Moon, and to serve as the proving ground for the human exploration of Mars.



***Advocacy on The Hill:** Simone Lilavois (VP, Student Board) and Mamta Nagaraja (3rd Year Board Member) on May 19th, visiting Congressional offices to advocate for NASA funding for Gravitational and Space Research.*

At the same time, we must recognize the extraordinary [breakthroughs and invaluable contributions](#) made through over 25 years on the ISS. Gravitational and space research have advanced the fundamental understanding of life and physical processes in space as well as the commercial development of Low Earth Orbit (LEO). The decades of great work that our community has performed in LEO has laid the foundation for humanity's next steps to the Moon Base, and also our Nations' next steps in LEO, from the ISS, to a series of [Commercial Space Stations](#) that will—with NASA's support—open new space-based markets and accelerate the incredible contributions from science, technology development and commercialization of space that the ISS, BPS, and our community have pioneered and enabled for so many years.



This month, we urge you to advocate for gravitational and space research with us. Write a letter to your Congressional Representative or pay a visit to their offices in your area. Share your stories of space exploration through gravitational and space research. Tell them why this area of research, and the NASA Programs that support it, are so important to you and to the future of space exploration, both on the Moon and in the pursuit of commercial space stations in LEO. Share your stories and experiences with us at president@asgsr.org. We want to hear from you! With a groundswell of support from you, and a visit to The Hill from your ASGSR leadership, together we can move the needle of gravitational and space research on a continuing path to make NASA's space exploration goals a reality.



ASGSR Board Meeting, May 19th, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott, where we will all be meeting in December for our 42nd annual meeting and conference.

2. Conference Planning

Conference Registration: Early-bird registration and hotel block for the 2026 Annual Meeting opened on May 15th! Make sure to visit the [2026 ASGSR Conference page](#) for the latest details.

Abstract Submissions: May 31, 2026, at 11:59 PM EDT is the deadline for abstract submissions. No edits will be permitted after the submission deadline. Complete submission guidelines, formatting instructions, and additional details are available on the [ASGSR website](#). Notification of abstract acceptance and travel award decisions will be sent no earlier than August 1, 2026. The call for Middle and High School abstracts will open on July 1, 2026.



Call for Sponsors and Exhibitors: Help us ensure that the 2026 Annual Meeting is a success by helping to sponsor the conference and being part of the exhibit hall. Review the sponsor prospectus for information on all the new opportunities available this year and reach out to Executive Director, [Ellen Gertsen](#) with any questions or to indicate your intent.

3. News and Special Announcements

ASGSR, the ASGSR Students Board, and the ASGSR STEAM Foundation recently announced the creation of several new student scholarships that will be presented at the 2026 Annual Meeting. Full details on all of the new awards are available on the [ASGSR website](#).

4. Advocacy for Our Community

On April 30, ASGSR and the Planetary Society co-hosted a lunch and learn for Congressional staffers to learn about AVATAR. The Congressional Planetary Science Caucus helped facilitate the event. Approximately 30 staffers attended a panel discussion with Dr. Lisa Carnell (NASA), Dr. Shelby Giza (Space Tango), and ASGSR Board Member Dr. Mamta Nagaraja (Vyoma Science and Engineering) to learn about the science and engineering behind AVATAR and its path to launch on Artemis II, the importance of AVATAR in protecting crew health on future missions to the Moon, and how 3D organ models help advance the field of personalized medicine. ASGSR Executive Director, Ellen Gertsen, moderated the discussion.



Advocacy in Action: Artemis II, AVATAR Lunch and Learn for Congressional Staffers, with NASA's Biological and Physical Sciences Division, sponsored by ASGSR and the Planetary Society, April 30th.



5. Upcoming Events and Calls to Action

ASGSR is collaborating with peer organizations across the physical sciences through AIP to better understand the experiences, needs, and professional pathways of our broader community. We invite you to share your perspective by completing the survey [here](#). It should take no more than 10–15 minutes. Your responses will inform conversations within ASGSR and ensure that the perspectives of our community are represented in a broader, cross-disciplinary understanding of the physical sciences. Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

6. Student Corner

Spaceball 2026: Are you a student living in the Washington D.C. area this summer? We are trying to gauge interest in attending DC Spaceball 2026! Spaceball is a space community networking event built around a baseball game, bringing together students, researchers, industry professionals, and others across the space community. Spaceball is scheduled for **June 17, 2026, in Washington, DC** and features the Washington Nationals vs. Kansas City Royals game at 1:05 PM. Depending on interest, ASGSR may be able to fully fund the cost of attendance for students. If you are interested, please fill out this short [form](#) so we can get an estimate of numbers and coordinate plans.

ASGSR Students Events Calendar: Students and early career members can stay up to date on upcoming opportunities by subscribing to the ASGSR Student Events Calendar. The calendar includes professional development events, networking opportunities, webinars, deadlines, and other activities relevant to students and trainees in the space research community. Subscribe at the [ASGSR Students Events Calendar](#).

7. A Moment in History

In this section, we've been sharing moments from our past meetings and events. Now, we'd like to hear about ASGSR/B moments in history from you. Is there something you'd like to share from our past? Maybe you have a story about our Founders, or an important event that has shaped our Society? Maybe you just dug up an old photo from meetings long past, and you want to say, "remember when" with your colleagues and friends? Please send us your stories at president@asgsr.org. Photos are welcome, but please no more than 250 words. We will share them here so we can all enjoy our ASGSR, past, present, and future together.

