AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR

GRAVITATIONAL AND SPACE RESEARCH

Annual Meeting Countdown Issue

ASGSR NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

Countdown

Register. Prepare. Connect.

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42nd ASGSR Annual Meeting | December 2–5, 2026 • Crystal City, Virginia | asgsr.org

1. Message from Leadership

As summer winds down and we look ahead to fall, the ASGSR community is entering an exciting season! With our annual meeting now only a few months away, planning is well underway for what promises to be an engaging week of scientific exchange. We look forward to coming together to share cutting-edge science, build new collaborations, and strengthen existing ones.

This is also a meaningful time to think about our future as a society. Last week, we shared a call for nominations for the ASGSR Governing Board. As our field continues to rapidly evolve, our board is focused on how ASGSR can continue to serve and connect with our national and international communities, explore ways to expand engagement beyond the annual meeting, and create more opportunities for discussion around emerging topics across the field. We are actively seeking nominations for board members who are interested in contributing their experience and perspective to these efforts. We encourage you to consider nominating yourself or a colleague who is committed to advancing our mission and supporting the community we serve here.

To this end, we also invite those of you who would like to get more involved in the community to join one of our committees. We are especially interested in hearing from members who would like to contribute to the External Affairs Committee and support ASGSR's advocacy efforts, which include communicating the value and impact of gravitational and space research to policymakers and partner organizations. We will be sharing more information about how to get involved in the other committees as we get closer to the Annual Meeting.

2. Conference Planning

Early Bird Registration and Housing: Don't forget to register by September 15, 2026, to lock in the best pricing. Rates go up on September 16th. Hotel rooms at the Crystal Gateway Marriott are still available and can be booked here.

Final Call for Sponsors and Exhibitors: We are actively seeking organizations to sponsor or exhibit at the Annual Meeting. Our prospectus has been updated to reflect several new opportunities this year, including additional sponsorship tiers and naming rights, time on the conference program, dedicated meeting space, and the opportunity to participate in the student and early career opportunity fair. Many of these opportunities are offered on a first come first serve basis, so visit the meeting sponsorship page here, or reach out to Ellen Gertsen, ASGSR Executive Director, as soon as possible to secure your spot. The deadline to register as a sponsor or exhibitor is September 30, 2026.

Art Contest: Artists are invited to submit their original work for the ASGSR Art Competition held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. This competition celebrates the intersection of art and scientific exploration, showcasing creative works inspired by gravitational and space-related research and is open to all artists attending the 2026 Annual Meeting. For more information and to submit your artwork, visit https://asgsr.org/awards/#art-competition. The deadline to submit artwork is **October 23, 2026**.

3. Upcoming Events and Calls to Action

NASA CAN: Solar System Exploration Research Virtual Institute:
NASA has released the final text of the fifth Solar System Exploration Research Virtual Institute (SSERVI) Cooperative Agreement Notice (CAN-5) as NNH26ZDA016C. NASA invites the submission of multi-institutional team-based proposals for research as participating members of the Solar System Exploration Research Virtual Institute (SSERVI). Proposals must clearly articulate an innovative research program addressing basic and/or applied research fundamental to understanding the nature of the Moon and its near space environment to enable future human exploration of the Moon with Artemis. “Mars forward” proposals that use lunar-focused research to develop approaches to Mars exploration also are welcome.

A two-step process will be used for proposal submission, in which only proposers that submit a Step-1 proposal will be eligible to submit a Step-2 proposal. **Step-1 proposals are due September 29, 2026**, and Step-2 proposals are due December 4, 2026. More information can be found here.

4. Student Corner

Applications for ASGSR student awards are now open until October 1st. All students are eligible to apply; ASGSR student membership is encouraged but not required.

Inspiration Scholarship: **Apply here.**

The ASGSR Inspiration Scholarship is designed to help inspire and motivate deserving students who, through any hardships, may have never considered that they can become the space scientists of the future. High school juniors and seniors attending school in the USA are eligible to apply. Four winners will receive **$1000 each.** Two winners each will be selected from the biological and physical sciences categories.

ASGSR Student Awards: **Apply here.**

ASGSR Student Awards are designed to motivate students to get involved with the spaceflight sciences and inspire one another! There are 3 categories of student awards (you may apply to all 3 if interested!) and all winners will receive **$250 EACH.**

- **Design**: Create the artwork that will be featured on the ASGSR conference t-shirt (1 winner)
- **Creative challenge**: Create a story / video / art piece about space exploration (3 winners)
- **Impact**: Host a space-themed event in your community (4 winners)

APS/IFP International Student Survey:

The American Physics Society and the Institute for Progress are studying how international students think about their education and their careers, and, in particular, what role practical work experience during and after a degree plays in those decisions. International students in the ASGSR community who are (or were recently) enrolled at US institutions are invited to participate in a short survey available at here. The deadline to participate is September 15, 2026.

5. New in *Gravitational and Space Research*

A recently published article in G*ravitational and Space Research* examines strategies for controlling biofilm formation in spacecraft water-recovery systems. *Multidomain Biofilm Control In A Novel Simulated Microgravity Reactor* by Madelyn K. Mettler, Haley M. Ketteler, and Brent M. Peyton, examines how to prevent biofilms, or microbial buildup that can clog spacecraft water-recovery systems, from forming during future deep-space missions. It tests three control strategies in a simulated ISS water system and finds that an antifouling coating, phosphorus-free conditions, and daily silver fluoride treatment together prevented viable surface biofilm formation over seven days.

6. Community News & Updates

ASGSR Welcomes New BPS Leadership: BPS has recently welcomed three new program leaders, and ASGSR joins BPS in welcoming them to our community! We look forward to working with these new leaders and supporting continued collaboration across the biological and physical sciences and space research communities.

Dr. Rihana S. Bokhari, Precision Health Program Scientist (two-year assignment), is an Assistant Professor in the Center for Space Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine and currently serves as the Scientific Research Director for the Translational Research Institute for Space Health (TRISH). She leads the TRISH Science Office, directing science procurement strategy, solicitation development, investigator support, and coordination with NASA's Human Research Program. Her expertise centers on musculoskeletal and radiation biology, autonomous research platforms, and technologies that enable human health and performance in spaceflight. She previously served as Deputy Chief Scientific Officer for TRISH and, before joining TRISH, as a support scientist for NASA Research and Education Support Services.

Dr. Tracie Prater, Physical Sciences Program Scientist, joined NASA in 2013 and most recently served as a technical manager in the Habitation Systems Development Office at NASA Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC), where she supported commercial partnership activities and studies related to lunar logistics, exploration habitat concept development for the lunar surface and Mars transit, and the maturation of inflatable soft-goods material systems. Previously, she was an engineer in the Materials and Processes Laboratory at MSFC, where she helped lead in-space manufacturing activities, including investigations involving payloads on the International Space Station, and supported work related to additive manufacturing and materials certification. She holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in mechanical engineering from Vanderbilt University and a B.S. in physics from Eastern Kentucky University, with graduate research focused on friction stir welding.

Mr. Marlon Cox, Physical Sciences Program Executive, has been with NASA for more than 20 years. Early in his career at NASA Johnson Space Center (JSC), he worked in the Engineering Directorate's Space Suit Systems Branch as a member of the Extravehicular Mobility Unit subsystem management team and the Constellation Space Suit team and served as the Oxygen Systems Lead. He later joined NASA Headquarters, where he served as the Environmental Control and Life Support System Technology Manager for Advanced Exploration Systems, which eventually became the Mars Campaign Office. In this role, he managed the development of life support technologies to enable human exploration of the Moon and Mars.

A Lunar Presence: Learning From the Past to Inform the Future: The ASGSR community is invited to participate in the upcoming Lunar Surface Science Workshop 23, which will be held on September 23, 2026. Invited talks will focus on the lessons learned from past initiatives and the kinds of capabilities that are needed to promote a vigorous and thriving U.S. presence on the Moon in the 21st century and beyond. The breakout sessions will focus on what knowledge we can, as a community, carry forward to collectively advance Artemis and Moon Base goals. A final report from the workshop will be submitted to NASA Headquarters for distribution to leaders supporting Moon Base and Artemis, as well as relevant science and technology development teams. The report will also be posted on the LSSW website. Click here for more information and to register.

7. Share Your News with ASGSR!

Have news to share with the ASGSR community? We welcome member achievements, awards, publications, outreach activities, lab updates, and other professional news for consideration in future newsletters. Please send submissions to marketing@asgsr.org.