



## **Position Specification**

American Geophysical Union

Chief Executive Officer / Executive Director

Private and Confidential

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Ref: Chief Executive Officer / Executive Director  
American Geophysical Union  
<https://www.agu.org/>

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### Our Client

AGU is a not-for-profit scientific society dedicated to advancing Earth and space science for the benefit of humanity. AGU supports a broad community of 60,000 members residing in 135 countries through high-quality scholarly publications, dynamic meetings and innovative programs. The society convenes the annual AGU Fall Meeting with more than 25,000 attendees from around the globe, as well as small community-developed conferences and workshops. AGU publishes the award-winning news publication *Eos* and 22 scholarly scientific journals with authors and editors from around the globe.

In its first 100 years, AGU has proudly and strongly supported deep discovery science. It plans to continue this support while also maintaining its strategic focus in the next 100 years on societal challenges to which the Earth and space sciences are essential. The current Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director (CEO), Christine McEntee, has been with AGU for almost a decade and will depart the organization at the end of the first quarter 2020. She has been only the third executive director in AGU's 100-year history. AGU has an annual budget of over \$40 million and a staff of approximately 140.

AGU has taken a strategic approach to leadership on important issues in the field and is a leader in ethics and equity in the sciences, is dedicated to science policy and communications, and is committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce. AGU brings scientists and community leaders from around the world together to tackle local issues through the *Thriving Earth Exchange* and has demonstrated its commitment to a sustainable future through the net-zero energy renovation of its headquarters in Washington, D.C.

AGU is governed by a 16-member Board of Directors and a ~60-member Council. The Board of Directors, chaired by the President, is responsible for the business, organizational, and legal affairs of the organization. The President, President-elect, Past President, General Secretary (Treasurer), International Secretary, plus the CEO constitute the Board's Executive Committee. The AGU Council, chaired by the President-elect, has three unique and critical roles: forming science policy, generating and deliberating science-related ideas, and advising on science and member issues.

For additional information, see:

- About AGU: <https://www.agu.org/Learn-About-AGU/About-AGU> (includes tabs to governance description, board, and council)
- Bylaws: <https://www.agu.org/Learn-About-AGU/About-AGU/Governance/Bylaws>

## **AGU's Organizational Landscape**

AGU is financially well positioned and is nearing completion of a new strategic plan. AGU's next CEO will inherit a high-performing organization with a committed team; a solid portfolio of programs, operations, and partners; and a dedicated membership. The next leader is expected to collaborate with the Board, Council, staff and membership on issues including:

- The identification, consideration and implementation of new revenue streams as AGU seeks to diversify its funding sources, particularly given market trends around open-access publication and the carbon impact of large in-person meetings which have been historic drivers of revenue;
- The opportunities and challenges of addressing both scientific and societal challenges;
- The enhancement and development of partnerships to integrate AGU's work into responses to emerging societal issues;
- Positioning AGU as an important convenor and thought leader on the global stage; and
- Ensuring that AGU continues to provide value to the community of Earth and space science and the growing community of users of AGU science.

## **The Role and Candidate Profile**

AGU seeks a visionary, strategic leader who can inspire broad public interest in science and the work of AGU's members. As such, AGU desires a leader with a demonstrated affinity for its mission and ability to interact effectively within the scientific community. This leader is expected to be a genuine listener and communicator, foster and support a culture of collaboration, and be approachable and accessible to all AGU community members. The new leader should have a track record of building consensus in complex environments and developing relationships with diverse constituencies. Further, they should be culturally astute, and capable of effectively convening AGU's broad set of international stakeholders who come from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences.

The successful candidate must help drive the development of programming, publications, innovative meetings, and other activities that will maximize member benefits and maintain long-term organizational health. Fundamental to the CEO's success will be their ability to satisfy the needs of AGU's diverse global membership. They will need to gain an understanding of the impact and member-perceived value of existing offerings and recommend modifications as necessary, including ensuring programs are modified as necessary for different audiences. Partnering with the Board, Council and staff, they will assess and address potential opportunities and must be open to refinement so that AGU can continue to provide value to its membership in a constantly changing external environment.

The next CEO will, at times, be called upon to act as an external spokesperson and will be expected to actively engage in raising awareness of AGU's science and science policy. They will be an extension of AGU's membership in the external market and will work to ensure that AGU continues to be viewed as a thought leader, and that its members are recognized for the important roles they play in society. As such,

they should be a compelling and persuasive communicator and, ideally, possess some understanding of Washington, science policy issues within the US and internationally, and advocacy. Finally, it is essential that this individual develop and maintain strong bi-partisan relationships across all branches and levels of government.

In addition to these externally focused competencies, this individual must also possess skills that will enable them to oversee AGU's budget and personnel. They must work to retain, develop, and, as necessary, recruit an outstanding staff. They must be able to work with the Board on realizing the new strategic plan, prioritize and define clear goals for staff, and manage performance toward achievement of those goals.

The ideal candidate could come from a variety of backgrounds, including association management, non-profit, private or public enterprise, and academic leadership. If lacking a scientific background, the leader is expected to quickly acquire a working knowledge of the Earth and space sciences.

*In summary, AGU seeks a leader poised to:*

**Set Strategy and a Vision for the Future:** This individual must be skilled at developing successful short- and long-term strategies and will ideally possess a track record of leading an organization through times of change.

**Execute for Results:** This individual should have senior executive leadership experience within an organization of comparable scale. They should be thoughtful, but able to act quickly and decisively when necessary. Financially savvy, they should be adept at setting and managing budgets and other resources.

**Lead Teams:** As a unifier and strong communicator, this individual is expected to support a culture of transparency, accountability, cultural sensitivity and empowerment. They should delegate and prioritize effectively and should have the presence to recruit and retain staff, board members, and donors. A person of the highest integrity, they should be self-confident, but also humble, gracious, and able to see the lighter side of difficult situations.

**Build Relationships and Use Influence:** The successful candidate will be skilled at building relationships with members, volunteer leaders, donors, partners, policy makers, and other important stakeholders. They will be able to build bridges between multiple generations of AGU membership, effectively engage audiences in both conference and interpersonal settings, and bring experience at managing board-level relationships.

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