



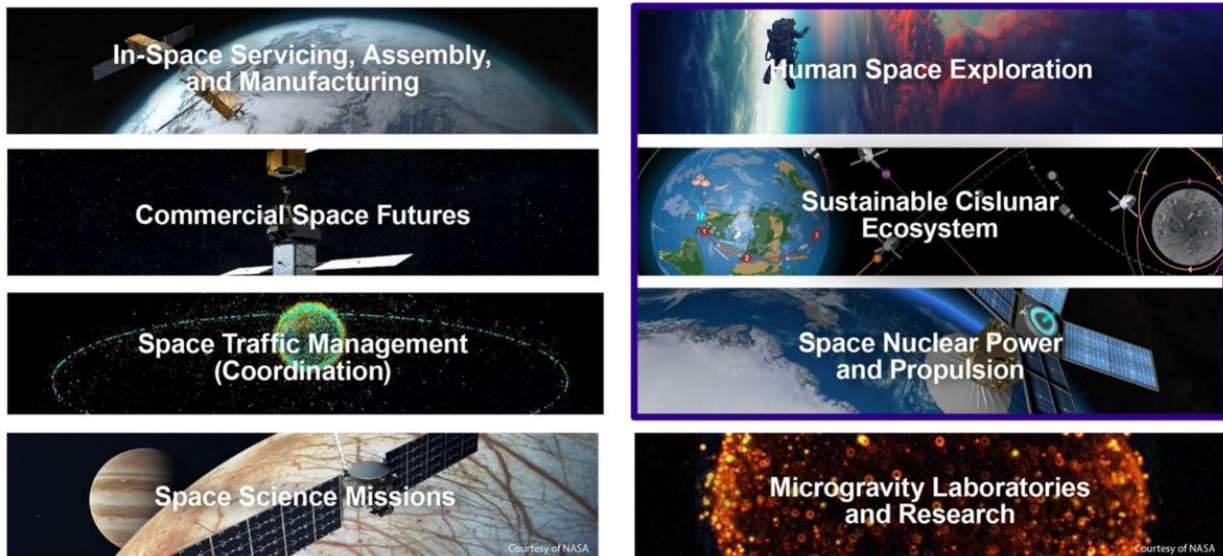
## 2023 Year End Letter

### Introduction

To Our American Astronautical Society Members,

AAS recognizes and appreciates the value your membership holds in being part of the premier network of current and future space professionals dedicated to advancing all space activities.

In 2023 AAS focused our attention on key topics that are especially relevant in the industry today. Dubbed the “Slate of Eight”, our discussions aimed to explore ISAM, Commercial Space Futures, Space Traffic Management, Space Science Missions, Human Space Exploration, Sustainable Cislunar Ecosystems, Space Nuclear Power and Propulsion, and Microgravity Laboratory and Research. We also focused on workforce challenges and opportunities that span every aspect of the industry. Our concentration on these themes contributed to a successful year and we strive to continue that streak into 2024 and beyond.



On behalf of the society, we are honored to share an overview of the valuable contributions you and AAS made in 2023 to the space enterprise through our technical committees, symposia, and STEM events.

### 2024-2025 Officers and Board

In December, we held our annual year-end Board of Directors meeting where we welcomed new board members. It is with great pleasure that we introduce our newly elected board members to our leadership team: Coralie Adam, Jerry Cook, Hilary Ranieri, and Sumara Thompson-King. And we're

pleased to have Steve Arnold, Carol Lane, Zigmond Leszczynski, Charles Scales, and Brett Silcox re-elected for another term. We are immensely grateful for our board members who contributed greatly to AAS leadership as they transition at the end of their terms. [Officer and Board leadership](#) is valuable to our organization, and we are excited to see where they take us in the new year.

## Our Staff

Jim Way, our Executive Director, celebrated his 6<sup>th</sup> year with AAS during the year. His acumen, diligence, and alacrity are key in the effective programming and overall operations of the organization. His efforts are reflected in the success of our events, highlighting him leading the charge to execute the ISSRDC Technical Sessions smoothly. Liana Porte, our Communications Manager, celebrated one year with AAS, impressively expanding our network and introducing shareable kits to help the outreach and promotion of our society and symposia. Marta Szotakova, our Events Manager, also celebrated one year with the Society and is instrumental to the seamless operations of our events, highlighting her role with the success of our Student CanSat Competition.

## Our Publications

The [Journal of Astronautical Sciences](#) continues to serve as an in-depth source of technical findings developing across the space enterprise. The year was successful with a record-breaking 136 papers submitted since Editor-in-Chief Maruthi Akella came into the position. The highlight of 2023 was the [special Cislunar edition](#) of the Journal with 40 papers submitted and 32 published.

Our online publication, [Space Times](#), introduced a new video interview series [Space Talk](#) in 2023. Hosted by Space Times Editor Amir Gohardani, the series engages guests to talk about relevant and interesting topics each episode. Four episodes were released in 2023, featuring a talk with Neil deGrasse Tyson, and discussions on time travel, the James Webb Telescope, and the moon's resources. Additionally, several articles were published covering timely space topics.

## Our Technical Committees

The [33rd Space Flight Mechanics Meeting](#) was held at The Line Hotel in Austin, Texas from January 15-19, 2023. The conference was a great success bringing together a record-breaking number of 367 astrodynamics researchers into the heart of Austin, Texas. Most notably, 52% of attendants were students. During the conference, 303 papers were presented across 30 technical sessions. Coinciding with the event occurring on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, there was a special panel session entitled, "Each One Teach One: Building a Better and Stronger Astrodynamics Community", to commemorate the holiday and MLK's legacy. AAS Executive Director, Jim Way, attended the event and presented Khanh Pham his AAS Fellow plaque.



The [45<sup>th</sup> Annual AAS Guidance, Navigation, and Control Conference](#) returned to Breckinridge, Colorado on February 3-8 for a productive and exciting event. With 330 attendees joining the conversation, topics included The Moon and Mars, Human Spaceflight/Deep Space Gateway, Autonomous Control of Multiple Spacecraft, and more. There was a committed effort for STEM engagement and building to grow the new generation of space engineers with a special Student Innovation in GN&C and the AAS STEM-SCAPE event.

We held the [AAS/AIAA Astrodynamics Specialist Conference](#) in Big Sky, Montana on August 13-17, 2023. It was well attended with 382 attendees and a total of 301 papers presented within 79 technical sessions. This conference introduced the panel format to the Space Flight Mechanics series as a trial to increase content. The conference presented the Dirk Brouwer Award to Chris D'Souza, who provided a heart-warming lecture. In addition, the conference presented the first ever Emerging Astrodynamist award to Prof. Natasha Bosonac, two AAS Fellowships, four Breakwell Student awards, and the Best Paper award.

### **Our Student Activities**

In June, we returned to Virginia Tech to host the [Student CanSat Competition](#) in collaboration with the Naval Research Laboratory. This competition showcases the impressive qualities the new generation of upcoming aerospace industry professionals possess in mission design and execution. Thirty teams from all over the world, including Indonesia, Poland, Peru, South Korea, and more, came to compete in a design-build-launch payload deployment competition. The team most successful in achieving the mission objective and declared winner was the Afterburner team from the University of Alabama in Huntsville.



AAS continued to evolve our long-term relationship with [the Students for the Exploration and Development of Space \(SEDS\)](#).

Through our partnership with SEDS, AAS welcomed SEDS student members to our Symposia and Conferences. Through the efforts of Michael Ciancone, who helped establish our relationship with SEDS almost 20 years ago, AAS participated in SEDS' SpaceVision conference in November. Mike was part of a panel on "Life After SEDS" and provided excellent comments on career building skills and tips to the student audience.

### **Our Symposia**

In March, we celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> year of the [Robert H. Goddard Memorial Symposium](#) at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory. There was a total of 284 in-person registered attendees and 36 virtual attendees. The 2023 conference explored the theme of "Our Environment in Space: Challenges and Opportunities" with discussions on space weather, lunar science, sample return, human exploration, workforce, and mission planning. Keynotes were given by Christa Peters-Lidard, Jim Free,

and Bhavya Lal, and an extra Goddard+ from Nicola Fox. Awards presented at the event included the John F. Kennedy Astronautics Award for Dr. Scott Pace, the Industrial Leadership Award for Julianna Scheiman, the Ordway Award for Sustained Excellence in Spaceflight History for Andrew Chaikin, and the Space Flight Award for Dr. W Michael Hawes. The 2024 Goddard Space Science Symposium, branding to emphasize space science, will be held on March 20-22 at the University of Maryland. We hope you'll join us!



In July, we returned to the Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio to host the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual [John Glenn Memorial Symposium](#) with 276 attendees, 251 in-person. Convening on the theme of “Powering Innovation from Earth to Mars”, the panels discussed space law, NASA Gateway, lunar exploration, lunar infrastructure innovations, and more. Guests were treated to keynotes from NASA Chief Technologist A.C. Charania, NASA astronaut Doug Wheelock, and a Keynote panel of Jim Free, Joel Kearns, and Trudy Kortez, moderated by AAS past-President Frank Slazer. The event also showcased a student poster contest in which each winner was an impressive young woman in STEM. The event also provided the opportunity to honor Dr. Rob Ferl and Anna-Lisa Paul with their Space Life Science Award and Eric Ingram with his Space Entrepreneurship Award. This event will return to Case Western as the Glenn Space Technology Symposium on July 15-17, 2024. We would love to have you join us!

The [International Space Station Research and Development Conference](#) was held July 31-August 3 in Seattle, Washington. We once again collaborated with the ISS National Labs team on the overall agenda and AAS hosted the technical sessions and poster exhibition at the event with high interest in a variety of subjects. AAS board member Zigmond Leszczynski was instrumental in helping with the organization and execution of the event. Technical topics discussed and presented on at this event included biology and medicine, in-space production applications, human health in space, plant science, STEM education, and more.



In October, the [von Braun Space Exploration Symposium](#) was hosted at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. With a focus on “Advancing Space: From LEO to Lunar and Beyond”, the event convened a record breaking 428 attendees to discuss topics including the Artemis program, advances in propulsion, early career professionals, contracting approaches, commercialization, and more. The slate of keynote speakers included NASA Administrator Bill Nelson, SmarterEveryDay YouTube host Destin Sandlin, and LogiQ Inc Co-President and past NASA Administrator Michael D. Griffin. We heard from our two Molly K. Macauley Award winners and the winning CanSat team, Afterburner. In attendance were Janet Ivey-Duensing and Marcia Dunn to receive their Sally Ride Education Awards and the Ordway Award for Sustained Excellence in Spaceflight History Award, respectively. The von Braun Space Exploration Symposium looks forward to returning to UAH in 2024 on October 28-30.



## **Our Awards**

Early in 2023, we announced the impressive winners of nine [AAS awards](#), including honors for the Sally Ride Excellence in Education Award, the Space Flight Award, Industrial Leadership Award, and more. These awards were presented to their accomplished winners throughout the year at various AAS symposia and technical events. The Molly K. Macauley Award, an award that aims to support and recognize future space industry leaders, selected two winners who received grants and presented their work.

Every year the American Astronautical Society awards exceptional individuals from the society and aerospace industry the distinction of [AAS Fellow](#). This year we recognized Yang Cheng, Simone D’Amico, and Khanh Pham the honorable status of an AAS Fellow for their significant contributions to the advancement of space and the operations of our Society.

## **Conclusion**

We look forward to 2024 as we celebrate our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Astronautical Society. This landmark year includes a highlight of awarding the prestigious decadal Lifetime Achievement Award. We thank you for being a part our Society and we are incredibly appreciative of your support and participation to help advance all space. We are better together.

Ad astra per aspera,

Ron Birk, President

Charlie Stegemoeller, Executive Vice President

Jim Way, Executive Director