WHO WE ARE:

The AAVSO is a welcoming and dynamic international citizen science community, recognized worldwide for significant contributions in astronomy research, as well as for its active community of observers. Since 1911, we have advanced astronomy by providing citizen scientists the opportunity to contribute to research on a global scale.

As we enter our 110th year of operation, we are implementing a strategic plan that sets the stage for AAVSO’s future and impact. Over the past two years, we listened to our members, studied the astronomy community’s needs, identified the ways our data supports research, and developed new ways to assist members with observing technology. We focused on three objectives: membership satisfaction, organizational impact, and long-term financial stability.

OUR MISSION:

“TO ENABLE ANYONE, ANYWHERE TO PARTICIPATE IN SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY THROUGH VARIABLE STAR ASTRONOMY”
KEEPING IN MIND AAVSO’S FUTURE AND IMPACT, OUR 5 GOALS ARE:

1. Advancing Science
2. Building a Diverse Community
3. Enhancing Technical Infrastructure
4. Increasing Our Operation’s Effectiveness
5. Financial Stability

GOAL 1 | ADVANCING SCIENCE

The AAVSO will be leading a citizen astronomy movement by encouraging its international community to collaborate with professional astronomers, enabling novel science.

Our observers contribute to long- and short-term scientific projects. The AAVSO is committed to supporting their work by providing the resources and opportunities needed to maximize their impact. The AAVSO supports them by:

- fostering key partnerships with high-profile international groups
- promoting the *Journal of the AAVSO (JAAVSO)* as a recognized publication of variable star research
- encouraging professional-amateur collaborations and mentorships
- maintaining and enhancing relevant tools for data submission, retrieval, and analysis
- leveraging our observers’ expertise to educate other citizen scientists
- educating our members and observers
- creating introductory learning materials to encourage and support aspiring observers
- providing access to reliable data found in the AAVSO databases
- creating engagement opportunities for individuals with limited resources
- maintaining a help desk managed by our professional staff

Richard R. Sabo, MD, FACS

“...The AAVSO has given me the tools and motivation to transform a minor hobby into a mentally challenging and extremely gratifying avocation. The instructional courses, the tools on the website and the mentoring attitude of so many members, including professionals, are incredible resources available that have benefited me.”

Attendees of AAVSO’s 108th Annual Meeting, Hotel Encanto, Las Cruces, New Mexico
GOAL 2 | BUILDING A DIVERSE COMMUNITY SUPPORTIVE OF THE AAVSO’S MISSION AND VALUES

The AAVSO’s superpower is its active, enthusiastic, and diverse international community of stakeholders. We commit to:

- empower individuals to grow and learn in variable star astronomy through AAVSO meetings, webinars, and new observing section activities
- ensure that our virtual and in-person events provide welcoming opportunities for exchanging ideas and information to maximize engagement
- connect professional and amateur astronomers
- promote inclusionary practices to guarantee the fulfillment of our mission to fully involve anyone, anywhere in scientific research.
- communicate the value of our observers’ data to professional astronomers

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Kristine Larsen
AAVSO Board Secretary
Past President of AAVSO
Co-chair of the Solar Observing Section

Kris is a vocal advocate of inclusion and diversity in science, working towards providing equal opportunities to all, in research and education. Kris received the AAVSO Director’s Award in 2019 for her tireless work and dedication to the AAVSO community.
GOAL 3 | MAINTAINING & ENHANCING OUR TECHNICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The AAVSO website is the hub of our international community. It is the platform that supports our programs and initiatives and celebrates our accomplishments. To that extent, we are building a content-development strategy for our website that will provide:

- a solid and secure technical infrastructure
- curated databases
- best practices in software and content management
- enhanced cybersecurity
- updated software tools to facilitate observation submissions, data download and analysis

“Of all the sciences, astronomy is the easiest for amateurs to make a contribution to real research. I might notice that a dwarf nova is at outburst. I call it in to the AAVSO. They tell a professional astronomer, and in short order, an orbiting telescope is gathering data on this object. How great is that?”

Prof. Kevin Krisciunas
Texas A&M
Department of Astronomy

UPDATED AAVSO WEBSITE
LAUNCHED DECEMBER 21, 2020
WWW.AAVSO.ORG
GOAL 4 | INCREASING OUR OPERATION’S EFFECTIVENESS

The AAVSO accomplishes its mission through the combined efforts of its staff, volunteers, observers, and members — 2,000 people sharing a common passion and joy of observing variable stars and contributing to scientific research. Over two hundred active volunteers augment the six-person staff.

During the strategic planning process, we identified ways to improve how we organize and guide our work efforts.

We established new operating committees to improve our effectiveness that include staff, board members, and volunteers from our community:

- **Programs Committee** — Develop metrics to assess ongoing AAVSO programs for member interest, costs/benefits, scalability, and vet new program ideas.
- **IT Committee** — The committee develops and guides the AAVSO’s IT strategy and implementation plan to support our website and our data management and analysis tools.
- **Marketing Committee** — This committee will develop programs and marketing materials to increase the visibility and presence of the AAVSO worldwide.
- **Membership Committee** — This committee’s primary responsibility is to work alongside the Board Diversity Committee to provide the strategies to recruit a wide range of individuals into our membership. This committee’s secondary responsibility is to monitor member satisfaction.
- **Observing Section Leadership Team** — Observing section leaders meet monthly with staff to share ideas and to create a consistent way to communicate with section members.

We expect these new committees to improve our entire organization’s effectiveness, helping us achieve all three of our fundamental objectives — high membership satisfaction, increased impact, and long-term financial stability.
GOAL 5 | FOCUSING ON FINANCIAL STABILITY

The AAVSO’s long-term financial stability depends on balancing income and expense while not over-drawing from our endowment. During the strategic planning process, we scrutinized all of our expenses. This included a detailed analysis of the work done by our staff, contractors, and volunteers.

Next, we analyzed our income, which comes from four major areas:
1. Endowment
2. Membership Dues
3. Member Donations
4. Other Sources

We are putting the following plan in place to balance our finances, increase member support and enable the AAVSO to grow and thrive.

- Reducing this year’s annual endowment withdrawal to below five percent.
- Increasing non-endowment income by working with professionals to develop a comprehensive fundraising campaign.
  Focus areas include:
  - identifying grant opportunities supporting our mission
  - identifying and contacting foundations that support science research
  - developing marketing materials to increase our visibility
- Increasing volunteer involvement.
- Initiating a $200,000 Strategic Plan Fundraising Campaign in 2020.

AAVSO’S INCOME SOURCES (Reviewed 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership Dues</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member Donations</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment</td>
<td>75%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Other sources include grants, new bequests, one-time donations, and sponsorships.

AAVSO’S ASSETS, 2004–20

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Real Estate</th>
<th>Financial Investments</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004 Assets</td>
<td>$15.5M</td>
<td>$15M</td>
<td>$30.5M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004 Assets in 2020 Dollars</td>
<td>$15.5M</td>
<td>$15M</td>
<td>$30.5M</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020 Assets</td>
<td>$12.8M</td>
<td>$2.5M</td>
<td>$15.3M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30% LOSS IN PURCHASING POWER

MEMBERSHIP DUES

$21.2M

MEMBER DONATIONS

$20M

OTHER

$15.3M

ENDOWMENT

$15M

Real Estate

$12.8M

Financial Investments
TOWARDS A PROMISING FUTURE:

As we celebrate 110 years since the AAVSO's founding, we have begun executing the strategic plan to build a dynamic and responsive organization. We are creating avenues to connect with “anyone, anywhere.” We are fostering key partnerships and engaging more individuals in the excitement of scientific discovery. We know you will be inspired to embrace and support our work to successfully achieve these goals, because you are the AAVSO!