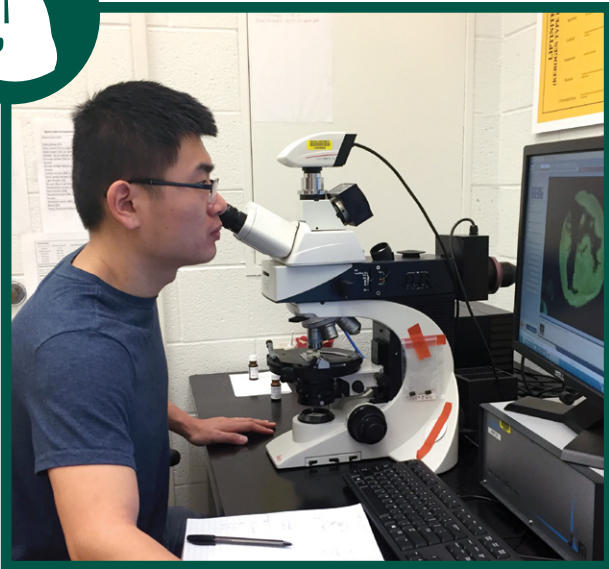


2019–2029 Strategic Plan



About GSA

Mission

To advance geoscience research and discovery, service to society, stewardship of Earth, and the geosciences profession.

Vision

To be the premier geological society supporting the global community in scientific discovery, communication, and application of geoscience knowledge.

The Geological Society of America (GSA), founded in 1888, is a global scientific society with more than 22,000 members from academia, government, and industry in more than 100 countries. Through its meetings, publications, and programs, GSA enhances the professional growth of earth scientists at all career levels; encourages cooperative research among earth, life, planetary, and social scientists; fosters public dialogue on geoscience issues; and promotes the geosciences in the service of humankind. GSA is headquartered in Boulder, Colorado, USA.



GSA will...
“continue to seek ways to engage and involve diverse people in the GSA family and in the geosciences.”



Note: quotes taken from survey responses during the Strategic Plan input gathering process.

Jumping the Curve

Over time, organizations evolve through various stages of development, from inception to learning, growth, maturity, and decline. As a mature organization, GSA must avoid decline by “jumping the curve” back to learning and growth. GSA has jumped the curve several times throughout our history (see timeline), and it is clear the time has come again for GSA to undertake transformational change. As the geosciences profession evolves, GSA must adapt to the changing needs of our members and carefully prioritize programs and services in order to remain relevant and sustainable well into the future.

Defining GSA's path for the next decade

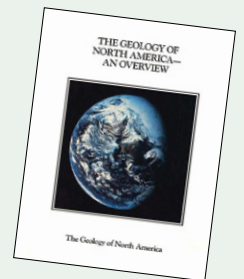
GSA has conducted business using a strategic plan for decades. The 2019–2029 strategic plan will serve as a guide for GSA to support a strong, diverse membership through advancing science, providing professional development opportunities, and promoting stewardship of the Earth, and to ensure that GSA maintains a fiscally responsible and technologically sound infrastructure.



GSA will... “maintain a proactive stance in promoting high standards for ethics in geosciences.”

GSA JUMPS THE CURVE

- 1888** American Geological Society founded for the purpose of “the promotion of the science of geology by the issuance of scholarly publications, the holding of meetings, the provision of assistance to research, and other appropriate means”
- 1890** First issue of the *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America* published
- 1929** GSA was legally incorporated
- 1931** (31 July) R.A.F. Penrose Jr. passed away, leaving GSA half his fortune
- 1932** GSA moved into its first “permanent” office at 419 W. 117th Street, New York
- 1948** GSA opened membership to anyone with a degree in geology or related science
- 1963** GSA headquarters moved to 231 East 46th Street, New York, and adopted a new constitution and bylaws
- 1971** GSA opened membership to students in geology
- 1972**  GSA moved into its current headquarters at 3300 Penrose Place, Boulder, Colorado
- 1973** First issue of *Geology* published
- 1980** GSA Foundation formed
- 1985** First *Decade of North American Geology* volume published
- 1991** Doris Malkin Curtis was the first woman to serve as GSA president
- 1997** GeoCorps™ America program launched
- 2007** GSA opened Washington, D.C., office focused on public policy and the geosciences
- 2010** 66-kilowatt solar-panel system installed at GSA Headquarters
- 2019** Decadal Strategic Plan adopted



Process Overview

Input Gathering

In May 2019, GSA Council approved the Decadal Strategic Plan, a satisfying result of months of effort. This process began in August 2017 with gathering thoughts, desires, creative ideas, and other valuable input from members— young and old, student and emeritus, industry and academic, government and independent, managers, deans, associated societies, donors, and staff. The goal was for GSA to be proactive and intentional about our future.

Compiling

After surveying members, nonmember geoscientists, donors, and many other important demographics, a strategic planning team, together with an outside facilitator, compiled and consolidated this input. The consensus was that GSA did not need to update its mission or vision. Instead, **five strategic aspirations** emerged:

Advance Scientific Discovery, Rigor, and Integrity

Support Early Career Professionals and Students

Host Premier Conferences and Meetings

Influence Geoscience Policy and Link Geoscience to Society

Provide a Sense of Community and Venues for Networking

Task Forces

A larger planning team composed of more than 60 GSA members, plus many staffers from headquarters, was then engaged and divided into Program, Finance, and Development Task Forces. Each task force was charged with sorting through the ideas to modify and enhance existing, or develop new, GSA activities and set priorities.

The **Program Task Force** looked at current programs and future initiatives through the lens of the five GSA aspirations, resulting in 77 new or revised initiatives that they prioritized.

The Program Task Force results were reviewed by the **Finance Task Force**. This group identified the resources

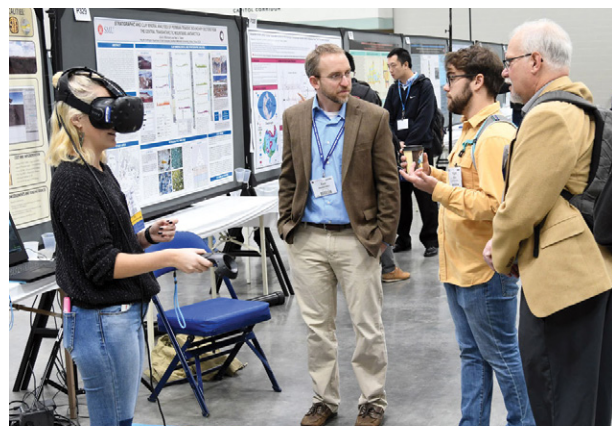
required to implement the program planning and proposed allocation of GSA's internal capital and capacity to fund new initiatives and/or modify programs or to recommend suspension of programs or initiatives.

The **Development Task Force** evaluated existing fundraising capacity and translated the plan into a prospectus for future investment and support.

After **Council approved the plan** in May 2019, **GSA staff began developing tactical plans** to turn these aspirational and strategic goals into operational realities— reorganizing within headquarters as needed and engaging feasibility consultants where required. GSA leadership has committed to participate in outreach, ad hoc committees, and review panels to reach its goals.



GSA will...
“increase emphasis on interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary topics.”



Strategic Plan Aspirations



Advance Scientific Discovery, Rigor, and Integrity

As a diverse, global geoscience organization, GSA will advance scientific discovery, rigor, and integrity to solve Earth's challenges by connecting the vibrant, comprehensive, and integrated geoscience community.

Objective 1 Enhance and expand cutting-edge geoscience and widely communicate those findings and knowledge.

Objective 2 Increase the multidisciplinary nature of the science offered through GSA programs.

Objective 3 Bolster scientific offerings by working toward greater inclusivity.

Objective 4 Lead the geosciences in building a culture of professional ethics, rigor, and integrity.



Support Early Career Professionals and Students

As a society committed to the next generation, GSA will invest in research, education, and professional opportunities for students and early career professionals worldwide, providing them with tools to meet the challenges of the future and find success on their chosen career paths.

Objective 1 Expand opportunities for students and early career professionals (ECPs) to communicate their science.

Objective 2 Promote a leadership culture through increased organizational engagement and student-led networks.

Objective 3 Strengthen the tools and support available for students/ECPs to build the knowledge and skills for professional goals through all stages of their careers.



Host Premier Conferences and Meetings

As a globally recognized geoscience organization, GSA will host conferences and meetings, serving as premier venues to attract and engage the global scientific community to share cutting-edge research, discover a compelling diversity of science, and identify and solve broad scientific questions and issues.

Objective 1 Design GSA meetings as the place to expand knowledge and share groundbreaking, multidisciplinary science.

Objective 2 Utilize the latest technologies to make meetings more effective, creative, and accessible to a larger, more diverse audience.

Objective 3 Cultivate and expand member opportunities for mentoring, networking, and career development.



Influence Geoscience Policy and Link Geoscience to Society

As the primary communicator of global geological events, GSA will engage and promote the global geoscience community in advocacy to influence geoscience policy, inform and educate the public, and propel scientific discovery to solve pressing earth and environmental challenges that impact people and societies.

Objective 1 Expand opportunities and resources for GSA members to effectively engage in policy at local, national, and international scales.

Objective 2 Develop and deliver products to convey geoscience knowledge to policymakers and the public.

Objective 3 Foster a group of advocates who will have a leadership role in driving geoscientific solutions to societal challenges.



Provide a Sense of Community and Venues for Networking

As the leading global geoscience community, GSA will connect the worldwide geoscience community, providing resources, venues, and opportunities to advance careers and foster relationships across the geosciences.

Objective 1 Lead efforts to provide a safe and inclusive culture for members worldwide to participate, contribute, and feel a sense of belonging to the profession.

Objective 2 Make GSA an essential and rewarding professional home for members from the undergraduate level through retirement.

Objective 3 Forge greater connections throughout the geoscience community across all levels and locales.

Implementation and Outcomes

The five 2019 aspirations are much the same as the first aspirations of GSA in 1888, when the *American Geological Society* was formed for “the promotion of the science of geology by the issuance of scholarly publications, the holding of meetings, the provision of assistance to research, and other appropriate means.”

To promote the science of geology, two ideals must be achieved—the advancement of the geosciences (its worth to society and the world, its milestones, and its integration with other sciences) and the advancement of geoscientists (their study, careers, opportunities, and professional excellence). The best way to honor the aspirations and achieve these ideals is to organize GSA around two centers for excellence.



The **GSA Center for Geoscience Discovery** will include programs and initiatives surrounding geoscience field experiences, innovation and incubation of multidisciplinary research, new and revised publications, revamped meetings and conferences, and other means of advancing the geosciences for members and the geoscience community.

The **GSA Center for Professional Excellence** will address the professional development needs of all our members, including, but not limited to, student and early career programs, service to non-academic members, expanded research grants, mentoring, professional ethics, and diversity initiatives. GSA aims to serve the professional needs of its members from their first student presentation at a GSA Section Meeting until they receive the Penrose Medal and beyond.

GSA will organize its operations to streamline our services and communications to fit within the centers for excellence. There are multiple steps and tasks along the way, and we are presently working to develop realistic action plans that include timelines and measures of success. Progress on the strategic plan will be evaluated against benchmarks and reported regularly to GSA leaders and members. Members are encouraged to participate and keep GSA on the right track with sound programmatic and financial decisions going forward.



GSA will...
“keep supporting students... As long as GSA serves students, it serves me.”



Call to Action

GSA Council, leaders, and staff join together in inviting all members to engage with the Society on this exciting journey to make GSA all that it can be over the next ten years.

Whatever your career stage, however much time or money you have to contribute, your participation will make all the difference. In large and small ways, each geoscientist adds to the fabric of our community and makes it richer and stronger with their presence.



GSA will... “increase support of geoscientists who want to advocate for the importance of science.”

10 WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

1. Keep current with your membership and recruit new members. Dues enable essential programs.
2. Read *GSA Today* and “GSA Connection,” open your email, and stay informed about GSA’s accomplishments. Tell your friends and colleagues.
3. Attend and participate in meetings. Bring your research; mentor a geoscience student or early career professional.
4. Donate through the GSA Foundation to support the next generation of geoscientists and large initiatives that benefit our profession.
5. Publish your research with GSA, serve as a peer reviewer, and shop in the GSA store.
6. Serve in a leadership capacity, and nominate another from our diverse community to do the same.
7. Attend a Congressional Visits Day and lend your voice to conversations about science in Washington, D.C., and in your own community.
8. Volunteer in local schools to excite children about geoscience and to help teachers with geoscience training. Volunteer to assist with media interviews in your areas of expertise.
9. Become a GSA ambassador when traveling, working, or researching outside North America.
10. Add your voice to the online Member Community to answer a question or provide a needed resource. Fill out your profile in the member directory and make connections with other GSA members.



Like most everything in life, you will receive as much from this professional association as you put into it. GSA stands ready to serve and assist all of you in the geoscience community, as we have done for over 130 years. We look forward to meeting the challenges of our shared aspirations and moving forward together into the next decade.