



## Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer

### ABOUT THE SOCIETY

Poised for transformational change, the [Geological Society of America](#) (GSA) is seeking an Executive Director and CEO who will lead adaptive approaches to meet the evolving needs of members and the geoscience community and carefully prioritize programs and services in order to enlarge the current ecosystem and be sustainable well into the future. The landscape for scientific societies is changing at an increasing rate, and GSA is committed to providing inspirational leadership that will steward and enhance the place of geosciences in the world as it confronts an array of challenges.

The Geological Society of America is a global professional society with a membership of more than 19,000 individuals in more than 100 countries. GSA provides access to elements that are essential to the professional growth of earth scientists at all levels of expertise and from all sectors: academic, government, business, and industry. The Society unites thousands of earth scientists from every corner of the globe that have a common purpose to study the mysteries of our planet (and beyond) and share scientific findings. GSA is supported, in part, by funds donated to and raised by the [GSA Foundation](#).

### 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 with the vibrant, comprehensive, and integrated geoscience community and disseminating and publishing research.

#### **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. This

includes providing research grants to hundreds of graduate student researchers annually to spur new understandings and the advancement of the next generation of geoscientists.

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### 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 learning, mentorship, and the cultivation of relationships across the geosciences. Fostering diversity, inclusion, and professional ethics in every aspect of the Society will build a culture of integrity where geoscientists thrive.

With the expertise of its committed staff and members, the Geological Society of America also supports geoscience teachers and bestows medals and awards. Fostering public awareness of geoscience issues is an important thread that knits together many of the Society's activities.

## MISSION AND HISTORY

GSA's mission is to advance geoscience research and discovery, service to society, stewardship of Earth, and the geoscience profession. In alignment with the mission, GSA's vision is to be the premier geological society supporting the global community in scientific discovery, communication, and application of geoscience knowledge.

#### Society Values

- Collaboration
- Scholarship
- Accountability
- Stewardship
- Integrity
- Respect
- Relevance
- Inclusion

Founded in 1888, the GSA was created with the purpose of promoting the science of geology by the issuance of scholarly publications, the holding of meetings, the provision of assistance to research, and other appropriate means. Shortly after, the first issue of the *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*

was published. The 1930s brought important growth in the Society's financial health and membership. Students became eligible to join GSA in the 1970s, further expanding the membership. The Society's journals grew in size and stature in the 1970s and 1980s as well. Doris Malkin Curtis was the first woman to serve as GSA's president, beginning in 1991. Recent years have seen an increased focus on public awareness and public policy with the launch of [GeoCorps™ America](#) in 1997 and the opening of GSA's Washington, DC, office in 2007. A new [Decadal Strategic Plan](#) was adopted in 2019 and fuels the Society's current directions. In 2021, its journal *Geology* was ranked #1 in the field of geology, as it has been for the past 15 years. Additionally, GSA provided nearly \$700,000 to support over 300 graduate student research grants in 2021.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

Twelve elected Councilors are drawn from across GSA's membership, each serving a four-year term with three Councilors rotating off the council each year. Additionally, the chair of the GSA Student Advisory Council (SAC) serves on GSA Council as a full voting member. The SAC is composed of student representatives serving on GSA Divisions, Sections, and Committees.

The Society's officers include an elected President, Treasurer, Council Member-At-Large, the immediate Past President, the President-Elect.

The Executive committee is composed of these officers and a Councilor-at-Large. The GSA Executive Director and the Executive Director of the GSA Foundation are both ex officio members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee is empowered to act for the GSA Council between its regular meetings, and reports to and advises the Council on matters pertinent to GSA's vision, mission, strategic plan, and other business. GSA's ED is also ex officio on the Foundation's ExCom. This structure maintains information sharing and a cohesive, collaborative nature of the relationship between the two organizations.

GSA's committees are a life-giving element of the Society. They, and the contributions of their members, are the arteries that make GSA an impactful and outstanding scientific society. Members voluntarily commit their time and expertise across a variety of organizational areas. The good will and dedication of committee members is an irreplaceable asset. A full list of GSA committees with descriptions is viewable [here](#).

### GSA Scientific Divisions

Similar to GSA's committees, the Society's Scientific Divisions are a core mechanism for member engagement – in this case, specifically the creation of new knowledge in the geosciences and beyond. GSA has 22 specialty Divisions that any member may join. Scientific Divisions generally meet at GSA's annual meeting, and most have their own newsletters, which are published at various times throughout the year. A complete list of Scientific Divisions appears [here](#).

### **GSA International Committee**

The purpose of [GSA International](#) is to promote, create, and enhance opportunities for international cooperation, provide a forum for science and policy discussions that are international in scope and relevance, build collaborative relationships with GSA Divisions and Associated Societies on international issues, and strengthen cooperation with international geoscientific societies.

### **GSA Geographic Sections**

GSA's six Geographic Sections have their own governance boards and organize annual scientific meetings in their regions of North America. These meetings attract many geoscience students and provide outstanding learning and networking opportunities closer to home. Sections offer travel grants not only to their own meetings but to the GSA Annual Meeting as well. Many Sections also offer research grants. To learn more about the Geographic Sections, click [here](#).

### **Associated Societies**

GSA has a long tradition of collaborating with a wide range of partners in pursuit of our mutual goals to advance the geosciences, enhance the professional growth of society members, and promote the geosciences in the service of humanity. GSA works with other organizations on many programs and services. As the Society looks to the future, it aims to enhance stronger, meaningful partnerships with societies and organizations across the country and around the world in service to members and the larger geoscience community.

National and international societies with consistent aims and missions of advancing the geosciences and/or science in general are invited to affiliate with GSA as Associated Societies. For further information, visit the list of GSA's Associated Societies linked [here](#).

### **GSA Staff**

GSA has a dedicated staff that facilitates all aspects of GSA's programs. The staff firmly believes in the mission of the organization and work together to create a collegial environment that supports the staff and the organization. The dedication and expertise of staff are among the most important aspects of GSA.

Many GSA staff have a long tenure of service. Recently, 19 milestone awards were bestowed for 10, 15, or 20 years of service. GSA's departments and the 51 employees who staff them are linked [here](#). While most staff are located in the Boulder area, there are several staff members residing in other parts of the US and Europe

## **MEMBERSHIP**

GSA's 19,000 members participate in the Society through one of five [identity classifications](#). Most members join as Professionals. Early Career Professionals is the designation for professionals with six or fewer years of experience since earning a geoscience degree who do not plan to pursue an additional degree. Students are the second most common type of member, composing 27 percent of GSA's membership. K-12 Teachers and Affiliates, while less common, have vital roles and engagement

opportunities with GSA. To learn more about the demographic composition of GSA's membership, click [here](#).

A strength of GSA is its commitment to serve members throughout their career. From their early days as students through retirement, member engage with GSA in different ways that strengthen their careers through networking, scientific exchange, professional development opportunities and service to the Society.

Regardless of an individual's membership type, GSA members enjoy the opportunity to participate in Scientific Divisions, Geographic Sections, community and discussion forums, online access to [Geology](#), [GSA Today](#), and [GSA Connection](#), member-exclusive webinars, access to field trips, courses, and GSA events, and reduced registration rates for GSA regional, annual, and specialty meetings.

Membership dues vary by country and are tied to the World Bank's [country economy classifications](#). An alternative to annual membership is the option to become a lifetime member of GSA.

## MEETINGS

Conferences and meetings serve an important function for the dissemination of science across the interrelated fields served by GSA. GSA's staff works with exhibitors, sponsors, and the experts who facilitate technical sessions to create successful and memorable meetings that members look forward to each year.

GSA's largest annual meeting, GSA Connects, is held each fall. It is the signature event of GSA's in-person convenings each year, with attendance ranging from 3,000 to 6,000 members. GSA Connects usually occupies a large metropolitan convention center. GSA headquarters and staff play a role in the planning, organization, and production of all GSA meetings, and are the primary facilitator of GSA Connects, along with a local organizing committee and technical committees. GSA Connects does not have a fixed venue, although every third year the meeting returns to the Denver Convention Center. In intervening years, the location alternates between an eastern and a western US city. The 2022 meeting will occur October 9-12 in Denver, Colorado, and a great many of the attendees look forward to meeting GSA's next Executive Director in Denver in October.

In addition to GSA Connects, there are six smaller meetings held each year, one within each geographic section of the Society. These meetings are usually held in the spring at hotel conference centers or at academic institutions and have attendance in the range of hundreds of GSA members. The locations of these meetings change annually. GSA headquarters staff works with Section staff to organize and produce these meetings, which are particularly crucial for student and industry engagement

GSA also funds and organizes several smaller high profile signature meetings, including the annual Penrose Conference and the Thompson Field Forum. These meetings focus on scientific topics proposed by GSA members and are competitively selected. They are the premier small meetings (50-90

participants) for collaborative research in GSA's scientific areas and are designed to be both interdisciplinary and to bring together various earth science communities both within and beyond GSA. Papers and proceedings that arise from these meetings are among the most impactful of GSA's contributions to the field of geosciences.

The COVID-19 pandemic, along with growing recognition of the carbon footprint of air travel, has vastly altered the landscape for scientific conference travel, and rapidly ushered in the virtualization of conferences. GSA has met this challenge with an all-virtual GSA Connects meeting in 2020, and a hybrid meeting in 2021, but not without challenges. Developing an engaging model and a sustainable business model for hybrid meetings for both GSA Connects and Section meetings will be a challenge for the next Executive Director of GSA.

## PUBLICATIONS

The Society publishes [five scientific journals](#), the [GSA Today](#) newsletter, and a collection of peer-reviewed scholarly books. Among the publications is [Geology](#), the top-ranked peer-reviewed publication in the discipline of geology for the past 15 years. The prominence and impact of *Geology* and the Society's other scientific journals demonstrates that the Society has dual aims—promoting and disseminating rigorously pursued scientific discovery and supporting geoscientists and other individuals who seek to do and use science for societal good. Online First is GSA's method of online book delivery. Finished Special Paper and Memoir book chapters are published online as the volume is being assembled, which means that authors no longer have to wait on their colleagues to reap the benefits of citation, and readers have the earliest possible access to research.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Geological Society of America affirms its belief and commitment to diversity and will continue to develop its diverse base. GSA is dedicated to maintaining an organizational climate where differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds, and needs are fostered with opportunities for members from divergent experiences to participate and contribute. GSA recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision making and leadership. Therefore, GSA strongly encourages the participation in any GSA activity of all its members regardless of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, creed, religion, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran status, marital status, medical condition, pregnancy, education, class, political affiliation, or parental status, and will undertake reasonable efforts to ensure that its activities are open to all. GSA's official position statement on Diversity in the Geosciences Community is linked [here](#). GSA's [anti-racist resource guide](#) and [RISE initiative](#) are examples of the Society's efforts to live its commitments in this space. GSA also has an associate director for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

## LOCATION

The Geological Society of America has been based in Boulder, Colorado since 1972. Earlier in 2022, the Society sold its headquarters and will be seeking a new location in the Boulder area to call home. The effort to identify new office space for GSA will be a part of the next Executive Director's charge. GSA's Washington, D.C., office is located in the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Building. The Executive Director and CEO position is based out of the Boulder office.

## FUNDRAISING: The GSA Foundation

Fundraising for the Society resides with [The Geological Society of America Foundation](#), a legally separate 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to develop and provide funds to support the goals and programs of the Geological Society of America. These funds are distributed according to the needs of the Society and in a manner consistent with the desire of the donors.

The Foundation's Executive Director and talented staff work with a broad range of individuals and partners to generate financial contributions in support of GSA programs and priorities. GSA programs benefit from both annual giving and endowed funds. The GSAF Board of Trustees ensures transparent, cost-effective operations and open communication with the Society, as well as prudent fund management. Recent years have included multiple six-figure gifts per year that have bolstered funds and enhanced the impact of GSA efforts within the membership and across society.

As of June 30, 2021, the Foundation's net assets exceeded \$31M (up from \$13M in 2010) and together, with GSA's endowment is in excess of \$70M. The vast majority (97 percent) of those assets are maintained in a diversified portfolio managed by a Denver-based investment management firm working with GSA and GSAF. These funds are combined with GSA's endowment, and oversight is provided by the joint GSA/GSAF Investment Committee. The distribution from the Foundation's portion of the endowment is set by the GSA Foundation Board of Trustees after review of the most recent Investment Committee report and based on a twelve-quarter trailing average of performance. In typical years, this has ranged between 4 and 5 percent.

More detailed information about the Foundation can be found [here](#).

## FINANCES

The Society's annual operating budget is approximately \$8M, and GSA's endowment currently exceeds \$39M. The 2020-2021 audit committee report is accessible [here](#) and the 2021 investment report is accessible [here](#).

## THE ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO

The Executive Director and CEO will lead GSA to increasing impact, membership growth and will serve as the principal spokesperson for the globally engaged and esteemed Society. The role and its responsibilities are complex, which will be attractive to talented candidates seeking to lead a mission-centered organization with a compelling and far-reaching charge and a devoted membership, staff, and partners.

While it should be recognized that GSA's Executive Director and CEO works in support of the entire Society, a close working relationship with the Executive Committee and Councilors is imperative for the success of the Society. There are ways and times when the Executive Committee and Councilors will provide leadership and other arenas and times when the Executive Director will be inspiring and propelling the Executive Committee and Councilors to move the Society forward. Similarly, a close working relationship between the EDs of GSA and the GSA Foundation is imperative.

In addition to oversight of the Society's activities and operations, including budgeting and financial affairs, the Executive Director manages the 51 staff who span multiple locations including the Boulder office and the smaller Washington, D.C., office. As a point of reference, the [2021 annual report](#) provides a snapshot of GSA's activities over the past year.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Advancing the Visibility of Geoscience – Serving as the face of the premier organization for the geosciences, the Executive Director will extol the importance of the geosciences and advocate for the diverse array of geoscientists who shape collective understandings of the world. In all they do, the Executive Director will bring a recognition that enhanced messaging on all aspects of GSA will benefit the Society and its members. In relation to this, the next Executive Director will travel nationally and globally to participate in important discourse related to the field of geoscience, both directly and tangentially. They will work with a range of partners to support student interest in geoscience as a career path with a range of viable opportunities. The Society and its Executive Director must provide a clear message that GSA does science for societal good. The Executive Director's success in consistently communicating this message will be important for GSA to transform from a transactional to a scalable organization.

Organizational Leadership – In collaboration with GSA staff, members, the Executive Committee, and the Council, the next Executive Director will assess the effectiveness of the current organizational structure and make improvements where needed. Effective messaging with internal and external stakeholders throughout these processes is paramount. The Executive Director will hire integral members of staff and ensure the empowerment, professional development, and mentorship of existing staff. The identification of GSA's new Boulder office and reimagining of the post-pandemic workplace are noteworthy responsibilities of the Executive Director. In addition, they will look for opportunities for shared decision making across a range of organizational constituencies. Because the ED has broad visionary responsibility



for GSA, a critical task for the new will be to transfer most of the day-to-day operations of GSA to existing or new staff.

Policy and Professional Practice Advocacy – Recognizing opportunities and challenges arising for geoscience and for geoscientists and advocating on behalf of the discipline and its members to governmental bodies, agencies, and other organizations, both in the United States and abroad. This may take the form of individual actions by GSA or coordinated actions with other similar organizations.

Diversity and Inclusion – Building on the momentum of the increasingly diverse membership, the next Executive Director will continue fostering an organizational culture and create strategic initiatives that encourage diversity across a number of facets including, but not limited to: gender, race, nationalities, socioeconomic, educational institutions, and geosciences' sub-disciplines. The next Executive Director will also provide intellectual leadership and serve as a champion for equity and inclusion, providing opportunities for underrepresented groups' participation and contribution, both at GSA headquarters and at GSA events and external engagements. Partnering in and supporting this work, the recently created position of Associate Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion dedicates their time and attention to these issues.

Strategic Planning and Partnerships – The Executive Director will guide GSA's strategic direction by implementing the existing strategic plan and enhancing it through engagement with Executive Committee, Council and members. The new ED will take GSA from a transactional to a scalable organization, thereby encompassing a larger constituency and expanding membership. The successful candidate will build strategies and recommendations, rooted in both quantitative and qualitative assessment, that not only speak to the Society's present goals but also consider the organization's future needs. Partnerships and collaboration are key factors in GSA's reach and success. Therefore, the Executive Director will also maintain and increase the GSA's strategic partnerships to leverage synergies, increase resource efficiency, and increase the Society's visibility and impact.

Financial Stability – The Executive Director will protect and ensure GSA's financial stability for years to come by closely monitoring the Society's financial planning and operations and seeking opportunities for new revenue generation and cost reduction. Moreover, the Executive Director will collaborate with the GSA Foundation in fundraising efforts. The successful candidate will continue to develop sustainable revenue pipelines to support the Society's activities.

## **DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

To be successful in the role, the ideal candidate will have an entrepreneurial mindset, deep administrative and personnel oversight experience, and a commitment to programmatic excellence. Additionally, the next Executive Director will possess many of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Experience running a large, complex, diverse organization, at a minimum the size of GSA;
- Demonstrated record of successfully integrating management skills with leadership;
- Excellent communication skills that are persuasive, motivational, inspirational;

- Familiarity with the significance of the geosciences, a passion for these fields, and an understanding of the motivations of scientists and engineers;
- An impressive track record of creating synergy, an ability to delegate and empower staff, as well as the skill and dedication to mentor leaders (i.e., members, staff, and others);
- Comfort with uncertainty, an ability to assess near-term and long-term risks, and an understanding of the business aspects of leading a scientific society;
- The ability to be decisive and hold oneself and others accountable;
- Energy, imagination, and integrity;
- The understanding and ability to develop positive, memorable meeting experiences that attract leaders, participants, and collaborators for the long term;
- The ability and interest in engaging the membership and building connections with other societies, industries, and government partners;
- Knowledge of the scholarly publication process, specifically in the sciences;
- A consultative and collegial leadership style;
- Outstanding diplomatic and negotiation skills and the ability to articulate complex and nuanced topics accurately in multiple contexts;
- A demonstrated commitment to collaborate and an ability to work with ease across constituencies;
- A consistent record of commitment to diversity and inclusivity;
- Experience working with a board of directors; and,
- A demonstrated commitment to transparency.

### Information for Candidates

The salary range for this position is \$220,000-\$250,000. GSA has provided a compensation range that represents its good faith estimate of what the Society may pay for the position at the time of posting. The Society may ultimately pay more or less than the posted compensation range. The salary offered to the selected candidate will be determined based on factors such as the qualifications of the selected candidate, budget availability, internal salary equity considerations, and available market information, but not based on a candidate's sex or any other protected status. Benefits include medical, dental, vision, 403(b)retirement ,health saving account, life, STD, and LTD insurance.

For best consideration, please send all nominations and expressions of interest in confidence to:



Jim Sirianni, Managing Director  
Sara Swisher-Anderson, Senior Associate  
Storbeck Search  
[GSAExecDir@storbecksearch.com](mailto:GSAExecDir@storbecksearch.com)

[The Geological Society of America Policy on Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action for All Employees and Applicants](#)