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## In Appreciation of AGU's Outstanding Reviewers of 2020

*AGU editors recognize the contributions of reviewers, whose valuable expertise continues to raise our journals' high standards.*

By M. Giampoala and C. Frost

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Today in *Eos*, American Geophysical Union (AGU) Publications again

recognizes a number of outstanding reviewers for their work in 2020, as selected by the editors of each journal.

Peer review is central to communicating and advancing science. While there have never been more ways to distribute ideas and research outputs, a robust peer review ensures that we maintain the highest integrity in our scientific discourse. The peer review process is organized by our journal editors, but every article decision relies on dedicated individuals who take time out from

their own research to volunteer their time and expertise. The work of these reviewers ensures proper evaluation of thousands of articles each year. We are truly thankful for their efforts.

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As the uses for scientific literature have grown, so has the complexity of papers, which now typically include more authors bringing more techniques, data, simulations, and results. This increase in complexity has increased the challenge and role of reviewing. The outstanding reviewers listed here have provided in-depth evaluations, often through multiple revisions, that greatly improved the final published papers. Their contributions helped raise the quality of submissions received from around the world, providing valuable feedback that elevates the prominence of our journals to the high standards aligned with the AGU tradition.

### **Many Reviewers: A Key Part of AGU Journals**

While we note these few outstanding reviewers here, we also acknowledge the broad efforts by many AGU reviewers in helping ensure the quality, timeliness, and reputation of AGU journals. We also welcome new and first-time reviewers who have joined the family of integrity stewards and have been providing authors valuable evaluations. In 2020, AGU received more than 18,100 submissions, which is up from the 16,700 submissions received in 2019, and published more than 7,163, up from 7,000 articles in 2019.

Many of these submissions were reviewed multiple times—in all, 19,227 reviewers completed 42,564 reviews in 2020 compared to the 39,368 reviews completed in 2019.

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***Our thanks are a small recognition of the large responsibility that reviewers bear in improving our science and its role in society.***

This increase has happened in the past year while each AGU journal worked to shorten the time from submission to first decision and publication or consistently maintained industry-leading standards. Several AGU journals regularly return first decisions within 1 month of submission, and most others do so now within 2 months. Reviewers represent a key part of this improvement. We look

back at 2020 here, but we have already seen that in 2021, during the pandemic and unrest, members of our amazing community have continued to accept invitations to peer review article submissions.

Editorials in each journal (some already published, some upcoming) express our appreciation along with recognition lists. Our thanks are a small recognition of the large responsibility that reviewers bear in improving our science and its role in society.

### **Additional Thanks**

We are working to highlight the valuable role of reviewers through events (though they may be virtual) at Fall Meeting and other meetings.

Each reviewer also receives a discount on AGU and Wiley books. We will continue to work with the Open Researcher and Contributor Identification network (ORCID) to provide official recognition of reviewers' efforts, so that reviewers receive formal credit there. As of 5 May we have over 71,700 ORCIDs linked to GEMS user accounts as compared to 59,962 at this time last year.

## Getting Your Feedback

We are working to improve the peer review process itself, using new online tools. We conducted a full survey in 2020, and we continue to provide a short questionnaire for feedback after each review is completed.

We value your feedback, including ideas about how we can recognize your efforts even more, improve your experience, and increase your input on the science.

We look forward to hearing from you. If you'd like to respond directly, feel free to take our survey.

Once again: Thanks!

—Matt Giampoala ([mgiampoala@agu.org](mailto:mgiampoala@agu.org)), Vice President, Publications, AGU; and Carol Frost, Chair, AGU Publications Committee



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