



December 2020

A message from our Director

Dear Friends,

This month's newsletter is dedicated to our Fall 2020 graduates! While this year brought unexpected challenges, our students persevered and attained an incredibly significant accomplishment in their lives. We are so proud of our graduates and all they have achieved!

Be sure to visit our [Fall 2020 Graduates Webpage](#), highlighting our students including [Dean's Medalist, Sarah Braunsch](#), a congratulatory video from our faculty, congratulatory messages from the school

community, and information on joining the ASU Alumni Association.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter featuring our graduation highlights, research news, announcements, and features. In addition, as a special end-of-the-year treat, we have compiled a selection of [2020 School Highlights](#) that I hope you will also enjoy.

I wish you all a restful and wonderful holiday season and a healthy and happy new year. I know we are all hoping for a significantly better year ahead in 2021!

Be well and keep safe,



Meenakshi (Mini) Wadhwa

In the News



100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Award announced for program led by Vivoni

Congratulations to professor and hydrologist Enrique Vivoni on the announcement of the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Innovation Award for the U.S.-Mexico Training in Environment, Agriculture and Management (TEAM) program, a collaborative effort between ASU and the Instituto Tecnológico de Sonora (ITSON) which will allow graduate students to participate in a hands-on, cross-cultural program focused on sustainable agriculture in the desert landscapes of North America. [Read more](#)

Blast from the past: Observatory discovery helps unravel astronomical mystery

An international team of astronomers, including Regents Professor Sumner Starrfield, using new observations from the Gemini Observatory, has discovered that CK Vulpeculae, first seen as a bright new star in 1670, is approximately five times farther away than previously thought. This makes the 1670 explosion of CK Vulpeculae much more energetic than previously estimated and puts it into a mysterious class of objects that are too bright to be novae, but too faint to be supernovae. [Read more](#)



Announcements



Geological sciences major recognized as fall 2020 Dean's Medalist

Sarah Braunisch is the fall 2020 Dean's Medalist for the School of Earth and Space Exploration. A geological sciences major, she found her passion for planetary science when she joined the Christensen Research Group and worked in the lab comparing mineral samples to observations from asteroid and Mars missions. [Read Sarah's story](#)

Elkins-Tanton named vice president of Interplanetary Initiative

Foundation professor and planetary geologist Lindy Elkins-Tanton, Director of ASU's Interplanetary Initiative and Principal Investigator of the NASA Psyche mission will become Vice President of the ASU Interplanetary Initiative effective January 1, 2021. The new position acknowledges Elkins-Tanton's success as a space explorer and her ability to bring people together to think outside the box when it comes to space exploration. [Read more](#)





Postdoctoral research scholar Carver Bierson honored by AGU for graduate research

Congratulations to School of Earth and Space Exploration postdoctoral research scholar Carver Bierson, who was selected for the Study of Earth's Deep Interior Section Award for Graduate Research by the American Geophysical Union, the world's largest Earth and space science society. [Read more](#)

Official school gift store now available online

Just in time for holiday shopping, the School of Earth and Space Exploration official online gift store is now open! Check out this new site for all your school gear including hats, shirts, bandanas, water bottles, hoodies, facemasks, onesies, and more! [Start shopping](#)



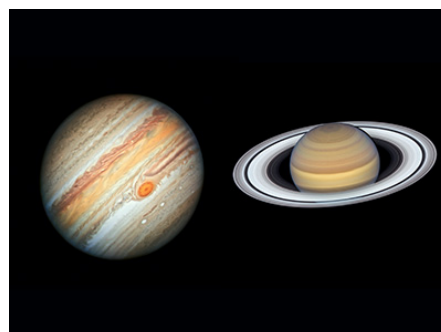
Lab of the Month

School director Meenakshi Wadwha's Isotope Cosmochemistry and Geochronology Laboratory (ICGL) is one of only a few isotope laboratories in the U.S. dedicated to the analysis of meteorites. It consists of a 1,000 sq. ft. clean chemistry laboratory and a neighboring mass spectrometer facility. [Watch this lab tour video](#) and [visit the lab website](#) to learn more.

Events

The Great Conjunction: Monday December 21

The Great Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn will be the closest observable encounter since the year 1623. This celestial event will happen during the evening of winter solstice 2020. Please join the ASU Marston Exploration Theater via Zoom Webinar on **Monday December 21, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.** for a live presentation. [Register in advance](#) for this FREE webinar.





Virtual Night Sky: Wednesday January 13

Join the ASU Marston Exploration Theater presenters on **Wednesday January 13, 2021 at 7 p.m.** for a live planetarium presentation. Learn about the planets and stars visible in the night sky from your own backyard and the latest events in space exploration!

[Register in advance](#) for this FREE zoom webinar.

Alumni Announcements

Two alumni selected to Forbes 30 under 30

Congratulations to ASU and School of Earth and Space Exploration Alumni Carl E. Fields and Hannah Kerner for being selected to the Forbes 30 Under 30 for 2021! [Read more](#)



Alumni: Keep it current!

Join us on [LinkedIn](#) and [update your contact info](#) so you can receive the latest School and university news, exclusive career and professional development opportunities, unique ASU experiences, invitations to special events and much more!

ASU School of Earth and
Space Exploration
Arizona State University



#1 in the U.S. for innovation
ASU ahead of MIT and Stanford
— U.S. News & World Report, 8 years, 2016–2021

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