COSPAR

About COSPAR

4 April 2019

History

After the USSR launched its first Earth Satellite in 1957 and thereby opened the space age, the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), now the **International Science Council** (ISC), established its Committee on Space Research (COSPAR) during an international meeting in London in 1958. COSPAR's first Space Science Symposium was organized in Nice in January 1960.

The Space Science Symposia, now called Scientific Assemblies, soon became the cradle from which the space research community developed and gave rise to many international projects from which we continue to benefit. Gathering between 2000 to 3000 participants, these events allow the presentation of the latest scientific findings, the exchange of knowledge and also the discussion of space research problems. Over several decades providing this service has brought recognition to the COSPAR Scientific Assembly as the premier forum for presenting the most important results in space research in all disciplines and as the focal point for truly international space science.

Role

In its first years of existence COSPAR, as an entity that ignores political considerations and views all questions solely from the scientific standpoint, played an important role as an open bridge between East and West for cooperation in space. When this role became less prominent with the decline in rivalry between the two blocs, COSPAR, as an interdisciplinary scientific organization, focused its objectives on the progress of all kinds of research carried out with the use of space means (including balloons).

Today, there are even more promising opportunities for COSPAR to be of service to space scientists worldwide. We are living in an era when the capabilities to pursue scientific space research are spreading throughout the world. Opportunities abound to cooperate, to maximize resources, to pursue ever more complex and challenging projects, to spread the development of technology to all nations, and to employ the contributions of all their talents to exploit the wealth of data that national and international missions have delivered.

COSPAR has an important role to play in the future stability of the world, and should approach its mission understanding that by its actions and its successes, a better world can result. COSPAR is not only essential to the pursuit of international space research, with all the benefits resulting therefrom, but also COSPAR can and should be the bridge by which the nations of the world come to understand that cooperation not competition is essential to the future of humanity.

In addition:

- COSPAR has played a central role in the development of new space disciplines such as life sciences or fundamental physics, by facilitating the interaction between scientists in emergent space fields and senior space researchers, provides the means for rapid publication of results in its journals *Advances in Space Research* and *Life Sciences in Space Research*,
- strives to promote the use of space science for the benefit of mankind and for its adoption by developing countries and new space-faring nations, in particular through a series of Capacity Building Workshops which teach very practical skills enabling researchers to participate in international space research programs,
- organizes, on a regional scale, scientific exchange and public outreach on specific research topics, in the framework of Colloquia and Symposia,
- advises, as required, the UN and other intergovernmental organizations on space research matters or on the assessment of scientific issues in which space can play a role, for example the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), in which COSPAR is a Participating Organization,
- prepares scientific and technical standards related to space research,
- and promotes, on an international level, research in space science.

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Principles

The Principles that COSPAR adheres to in pursuit of its Mission are:

- COSPAR promotes scientific research in space at an international level, with emphasis on the exchange of results, information, and opinions, and provides a forum, open to all scientists.
- COSPAR endeavors to ensure that a vibrant international space research effort can be conducted without impediment from geopolitical tensions or differences.
- COSPAR requires that presentations at its meetings and publications in its journals are the result of scientific research that was conducted with the highest ethical standards.
- COSPAR discloses any financial support that might be perceived as influencing its activities or positions it might advocate.
- COSPAR promotes equal opportunity in all of its activities and will not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment.
- COSPAR encourages meaningful roles in all activities for younger scientists, who are the future of international space research.

COSPAR’s objectives are to promote on an international level scientific research in space, with emphasis on the exchange of results, information and opinions, and to provide a forum, open to all scientists, for the discussion of problems that may affect scientific space research. These objectives are achieved through the organization of Scientific Assemblies, publications and other means.

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Mission

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The Mission of COSPAR is to assemble a worldwide community of scientists who are dedicated to international cooperation in space research and who through COSPAR will:

- Share the results of their research and build bonds and encourage collaborations with scientists from around the world, and by doing so enhance their own career development.
- Participate in exerting influence on the conduct of space research, communicating to the public the exciting results from space research, and extending the benefits of space research to society.
- Engage with and benefit from the interaction with science-based global industry who are interested in the application of scientific discovery to real world challenges and opportunities.
- Support engagement with the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs on projects of mutual interest such as planetary protection, space weather, and space debris.
- Support efforts to enable space programs under development to reach their full potential, thereby spreading the benefits of space research to all nations.
- Support the developed space programs through opportunities for direct interactions with space agency leaders, essential guidance on planetary protection requirements, and advice on future missions.

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