

First Annual Report of the AAS Working Group on Accessibility and Disability

The Working Group on Accessibility and Disability (WGAD) was founded in January 2016 by the AAS Council in response to a proposal from AAS members who were concerned with widespread ableism in astronomy that is driving disabled students and scientists out of the field. From the beginning, undergraduate and graduate student members have played key roles in the formation and leadership of WGAD. This report covers the first four months of WGAD's existence from January through April 2016.

WGAD is developing recommendations on improving the accessibility of astronomical journals. This document is nearing completion, and will recommend that journals perform continual usability evaluations. These evaluations could be performed using focus groups that include students and scientists with disabilities. Providing multiple modes of access is important because no single mode of access will work for everyone.

In order to fulfil its mission, intersectionality must be at the core of the work done by WGAD. WGAD is working to build partnerships with the Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy (CSWA), the Committee on the Status of Minorities in Astronomy (CSMA), and the Committee for Sexual-orientation and Gender Minorities in Astronomy (SGMA). Sarah Tuttle and Jessica Kirkpatrick are the liaisons between WGAD and the CSWA, and Adam Burgasser has recently begun acting as the liaison between the CSMA and WGAD. We have started a discussion across these committees to form an intersectional site visit program as included in the recommendations developed from Inclusive Astronomy 2015. We are hoping that members of WGAD will write guest posts for the Astronomy in Color and Women in Astronomy blogs.

WGAD has begun an international collaboration with the IAU Working Group on Astronomy for Equity and Inclusion that. Members of WGAD are helping to organize the workshop on Astronomy Beyond the Common Senses for Accessibility and Inclusion to be held on 2016 October 8 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

WGAD now has an informational webpage hosted by AAS. We are planning our official website which will host best practice guides, recommendations on accessibility, and other resources. Members of WGAD have created wiki pages on AstroBetter on accessibility to provide a list of resources while our webpage is under development.

WGAD's goals for the coming year include:

- Completing our website;
- Developing best practice guides on accessibility and inclusion;
- Building collaborations with the CSMA, CSWA, and SGMA (including for an intersectional site visit program); and
- Developing plans and strategies to support students and scientists who are actively facing ableism in their institution.