Chief Executive Officer

The Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) seeks a visionary, strategic, and engaging leader to serve as their Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO of the ASP will lead the organization into the future through inspiring leadership, innovative strategic vision, and sustainable and thriving financial management. The ASP’s astronomy education efforts target amateur astronomers, professional research astronomers, K-college classrooms, science museums, planetariums, national and state parks, nature centers, libraries, astronomy clubs, and the wider community.

ABOUT THE ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF THE PACIFIC

Celebrating its 135th year in 2024, the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) is an international 501c3 nonprofit astronomy organization, headquartered in San Francisco, CA. Founded in 1889 as a society to support amateur and professional astronomers, the ASP has maintained its commitment to fostering scientific literacy, promoting educational outreach, and advocating for the exploration of the cosmos. Over the years, the ASP has evolved into a global community of astronomers, educators, and enthusiasts united by their passion for understanding the universe, and today the ASP continues to develop and disseminate astronomy education kits, training programs, publications, education resources, and online services and tools in its mission to inspire youth and adults.

Mission
Through its materials, resources, and programs, the ASP promotes public interest, engagement, and science literacy through the awe and wonder of astronomy and related fields.

Vision
ASP envisions a world where people of all ages and backgrounds engage in astronomy and share their passion for astronomy with others.

Core Values
ASP believes astronomy is a fundamentally democratic science, with the cosmos equally accessible to all people regardless of age, gender, background, ethnicity, economic status, or abilities.
PROGRAMS

The heart and soul of the ASP’s mission is connecting people to astronomy learning opportunities no matter what the classroom looks like: school, museum, planetarium, national park, state park, nature center, astronomy club, city sidewalk, online, or backyard. The ASP is revered in the astronomy education community for providing diverse and impactful educational programs and is dedicated to being innovative, nimble, and flexible as scientific understanding evolves.

This year three of ASP’s programs are celebrating the 2024 solar eclipse—“Eclipse Ambassadors Off the Path”, “ASP Eclipse Stars”, and “ASP Eclipse Stars – for Educators.” Each program is designed to enable individuals to enjoy and experience the eclipse while learning the science of astronomy. The programs are designed to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together. Plans are in place to ensure many of these outreach events are presented to audiences from underserved populations.

The ASP is dedicated to encouraging, supporting, and inspiring youth and the general public to enjoy astronomy and to learn more about our universe. This knowledge enables them to better understand the significant discoveries frequently publicized in today’s media. Across programs engagements and partnerships, including the Night Sky Network for amateur astronomers, Girl Scouts Stars, and Big Astronomy, highlighting our partnerships in the Southern Hemisphere. The ASP Teaching Learning Center provides K-12 level programming for teachers and educators.

Community: Joining the ASP is open to anyone with an interest in astronomy, whether amateur or professional. Community partners receive access to publications, discounts on conferences and workshops, and opportunities to connect with fellow enthusiasts through annual conferences and workshops.

Publications: Publications of the ASP (PASP) is the technical journal of the ASP, publishing refereed manuscripts on astronomical research as well as articles on the latest innovations in astronomical instrumentation and software. It features invited review papers on contemporary topics, contributed research articles, a section on astronomical instrumentation and data analysis, conference abstracts and summaries, and PhD dissertation summaries.

Mercury is an online magazine open to the ASP Community and Institutions on a subscription basis. This online quarterly magazine contains articles about recent discoveries in astronomy (e.g. results from James Webb and other observatories), discussion of modern-day topics (e.g. space trash, planetary defense from asteroids), and astronomy history. It is a fun read!

Annual Awards Gala: Each year the ASP holds an Awards Gala in honor of and to recognize the ASP Awards recipients for their leadership in and advancement of astronomy and space science. This includes the Catherine Wolfe Bruce Medal, one of the most prestigious awards in all of astronomy. The Gala provides a platform to acknowledge and celebrate the exceptional accomplishments of astronomers, educators, researchers, and communicators who have demonstrated excellence and innovation in their respective fields.

Annual Meeting: The ASP has historically offered and organized an annual meeting, bringing together astronomers, educators, members, and the public from around the world to present research, participate in workshops, and engage in discussions on the latest developments in the field. The ASP2023 meeting
was held as a virtual conference, exploring the art, culture, and science of solar eclipses in preparation for the upcoming two solar eclipses in 2023 and 2024.

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

The ASP partners with and receives financial support from NASA, the National Science Foundation (NSF), and other leading professional science and education organizations in North America and overseas. Financial support comes from a diverse portfolio of sources that includes government agencies, private and corporate foundations, corporate sponsorship, earned revenue, and donations from ASP members and the public. The Society also publishes and receives revenue from two professional journals: The Proceedings of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific (PASP) and the ASP Conference Series (ASPCS). The organization’s annual operating budget is approximately $2,700,000, and the institution employs a staff of 15 people working both in San Francisco, but increasingly remotely from their homes. The Society also holds a number of assets, including equity in the San Francisco headquarters, as well as a portfolio of restricted and unrestricted investment funds. These assets total about $7.5 million.

GOVERNANCE

The ASP is governed by the Board of Directors comprising a diverse group of individuals with expertise in astronomy, education, business, marketing, administration, nonprofit management, and community engagement. The Board of Directors serves as the governing body responsible for setting the ASP’s strategic direction, overseeing operations, and ensuring the fulfillment of the Society's mission.

THE ROLE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Astronomical Society of the Pacific (ASP) is seeking a dynamic and visionary Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who will lead the organization into the future through inspiring leadership, innovative organizational thinking, and excellent financial management. The CEO is responsible for the operation of the Society and its staff including administration, programs, financial management, fundraising, marketing, and outreach, and reports directly to the Board of Directors. As the ASP’s lead spokesperson, the CEO represents the Society to a wide range of stakeholders including its members, NASA, NSF, AAS, the amateur astronomy community, other astronomy and educational organizations, supporters, donors, and the general public.

Though the mission of the Society is unchanged, over the past two decades there have been seismic shifts in the way astronomy and astronomy education materials, programs, and resources are created, managed, and disseminated. For example, the Internet and social media have fundamentally changed the relationship between the ASP and its members, program participants, journal and magazine subscribers, and donors. The ASP has also made fundamental changes in the workplace and now supports an increasingly diverse staff working fully remote and hybrid. The Society remains deeply committed to diversity and inclusion through its many programs and initiatives and continues to focus on increasing the diversity of our staff and ensuring our programs reach out to diverse and underserved communities. All these changes in the landscape require innovative and creative leadership.
Emergent questions that await the new CEO include:

- What forward-looking management structures and systems are appropriate to ensure effective operations, improved administrative efficiency, and increasing the ASP’s presence in the astronomical community and the public sphere?
- How can the ASP improve its financial management, ensuring maximum resource utilization within budget, and maintain the Society’s positive financial position?
- Can the ASP expand and diversify its funding strategies and how should development be emphasized in the ASP’s future organizational design?
- In addition to maintaining and expanding current NASA and NSF funding, how can the ASP attract new donors, foundations, and corporations to support its mission?
- How can the ASP maintain the high reputation of its three major publications (Proceedings of the ASP, the ASP Conference Series, and Mercury magazine) and how can they best be leveraged in today's digital landscape?
- How should the ASP deploy new technology and social media to work with its audience? Are there new ways the Society should be disseminating its materials?
- How can the ASP most effectively leverage its highly skilled staff in a more distributed hybrid work environment, while maintaining its culture of teamwork, collaboration, and creativity?
- How can the ASP’s focus on diversity in all of its astronomy education initiatives and programs be further enhanced? How can diversity and inclusion continue to be developed internally?
- Should the ASP associate with other nonprofit organizations to increase its impact?

**KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

To succeed in this role, the CEO will address several key opportunities and challenges, as detailed below:

**Financial Stability** – The CEO will ensure ASP’s financial stability for years to come by actively managing the organization’s financial resources and operations and seeking opportunities for new revenue generation and cost reduction. The CEO will advance ASP’s pursuit of grants and revitalize fundraising efforts. The successful candidate will take calculated risks to develop sustainable revenue pipelines to support the Society’s activities.

**Strategic Planning and Partnerships** – The CEO will guide ASP’s strategic direction by implementing the existing strategic plan and enhancing it through engagement with the Board of Directors. The next CEO will take ASP from a transactional to a scalable organization, thereby encompassing a larger constituency and expanding constituents. 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 ASP’s reach and success. Therefore, the CEO will also maintain and increase the ASP’s strategic partnerships to leverage synergies, increase resource efficiency, and increase the Society’s visibility and impact.

**Organizational Leadership** – In collaboration with ASP staff and the Board of Directors, the next CEO 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
CEO will hire integral members of staff and ensure the empowerment, professional development, and mentorship of existing staff. The evaluation of ASP’s existing office space in San Francisco and the reimagination of the post-pandemic workplace are noteworthy responsibilities of the CEO. In addition, they will look for opportunities for shared decision making across a range of organizational constituencies. Because the CEO has broad visionary responsibility for ASP, a critical task for the new leader will be to transfer most of the day-to-day operations of ASP to staff.

**Advancing the Visibility of Astronomy** – Serving as the face of the premier organization in astronomy education, the CEO will extol the importance of astronomy education and advocate for the diverse array of astronomers who shape collective understandings of the world. In all they do, the CEO will bring a recognition that enhanced messaging over all aspects of ASP will benefit the Society and its constituents. In relation to this, the next CEO will work with a range of existing and new partners to support student interest in astronomy as a career path with a range of viable opportunities. The Society and its CEO must provide a clear message that the ASP offers astronomy education as a societal good. The CEO’s success in consistently communicating this message will be important for the ASP to transform from a maintenance to a growth-oriented organization.

**Diversity and Inclusion** – Building on the momentum of the increasingly diverse community of amateur and professional astronomers, the next CEO 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, sexualities, nationalities, socioeconomics, and astronomy’s sub-disciplines. The next CEO will also provide intellectual leadership and serve as a champion for equity and inclusion, directing future efforts toward a more diverse astronomy field and providing opportunities for underrepresented groups’ participation and contribution at ASP events and external engagements.

**DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

As a CEO-level position demanding excellent personal and personnel leadership, business, financial, and organizational skills, the following qualities are also highly desirable:

- A deep passion for astronomy with a strong understanding of the field, including the impact of new technology on education and public engagement. You are highly motivated to spread and stimulate science literacy worldwide.
- Excellent strategic thinking and problem-solving skills, with an ability to anticipate and respond to changing technological and media opportunities.
- Knowledge of fundraising strategies, including securing government grants, and donor relations relevant to the nonprofit sector engaging with diverse volunteer and donor groups.
- Experience in a leadership role, preferably as an ED or CEO or comparable senior management position.
- A successful track record in driving innovation and managing organizational growth.
- Exceptional financial and budget management skills, including strategy, analysis, decision making, and execution.
• Demonstrated successful experience engaging with and supporting stakeholders in the astronomy community, e.g. NASA, the NSF, researchers, amates, informal educators, K-12 science teachers, etc.
• Ability to assess operations at a strategic level utilizing strong organizational management skills, including planning, delegating, program development, and task facilitation in a hybrid work environment.
• An emphasis of fostering growth and professional development of the workforce through strong communications that assure employee engagement and enthusiasm for ASP initiatives.
• The ASP offers a hybrid work environment. For visibility, the position will at minimum be present onsite in the San Francisco office for an agreed upon percentage of time each month.
• Strong communication and advocacy skills, with the ability to engage with diverse stakeholders including educators, contracts administrators, scientists, policymakers, and the general public.
• Experience building collaborations with other organizations.
• Masters or PhD in astronomy or related science preferred.

**COMPENSATION**

This is a full time, exempt position with an annual salary range between $180,000- $210,000, based on qualification and commensurate with experience. The position includes medical, dental, vision, retirement, and other benefits.

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

Jim Sirianni, Managing Director
Kate Phillips, Senior Associate
Storbeck Search
ASP-CEO@storbecksearch.com

For more information, please visit home page at [AstroSociety.org](http://AstroSociety.org)

*The Astronomical Society of the Pacific is an equal opportunity employer. All applicants are considered for all positions without regard to race, religion, color, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, ancestry, physical/mental disability, medical condition, military/veteran status, genetic information, marital status, ethnicity, alienage, or other protected classification, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.*

*Equal access to programs, services, and employment is available to all qualified persons. Those applicants requiring accommodation should complete the application and/or interview process and contact a management representative.”*