



COSPAR 2026 AWARDS

Press Release (for release 31 July 2026) Committee on Space Research (COSPAR)

COSPAR is happy to announce the winners of its 2026 Awards, to be presented during the 46th COSPAR Scientific Assembly in Florence, Italy. COSPAR bestows a number of medals and awards each year, some jointly with other institutions or space agencies. Scientists who have made an outstanding contribution to space research and who are working in any of the fields covered by COSPAR are eligible. The coveted COSPAR Awards are aimed at encouraging space science and exploration research and are an important step to achieve international cooperation in the field. This year's nominees have come from a wide range of backgrounds and after careful consideration by the Awards Committee, Bureau, and partner organizations the following selection has been made.

A complete list of citations and a brief description of COSPAR are included below. Previous citations for honors awarded at COSPAR Assemblies can be found [online](#).

Through an agreement with the International Astronomical Union (IAU), recipients of COSPAR awards are honored by the attribution of minor planets designated by the IAU Working Group on Small Bodies Nomenclature.

To be presented on 3 August during the 46th COSPAR Scientific Assembly 1 – 9 August 2026, Florence, Italy

See below for complete citations and a brief description of COSPAR.

- COSPAR Space Science Award for outstanding contributions to space science:

Angela Bazzano (Italy), Director Of Research, Associated to Istituto Di Astrofisica E Planetologia Spaziali, INAF, Area di Ricerca Roma 2-Tor Vergata, Via del Fosso del Cavaliere 100, 00133 Rome, Italy

Gary P. Zank (USA), Aerojet-Rocketdyne Chair in Space Science and University of Alabama Board of Trustees Trustee Professor, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Center for Space Plasma and Aeronomic Research and Dept. of Space Science, Sparkman Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35899, USA

- COSPAR International Cooperation Medal for distinguished contributions to space science and work that has contributed significantly to the promotion of international scientific cooperation:

Guenther Reitz (Germany), Professor, School of Radiation Medicine and Protection, Soochow University, Suzhou, China and Former Head Department of Radiation Biology, German Aerospace Center, Cologne

- COSPAR William Nordberg Medal commemorating the late William Nordberg and for distinguished contributions to the application of space science in a field covered by COSPAR:

David Gary Sibeck (USA), Chief Scientist, Heliophysics, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt Road, Greenbelt, MD 20771, USA

WANG Jinsong (China), Director-General, National Satellite Meteorological Center/National Center for Space Weather, China Meteorological Administration, No.46 Zhongguancun South Street, Haidian District, Beijing

- COSPAR Distinguished Service Medal recognizing extraordinary services rendered to COSPAR over many years.

Carlos Gabriel (Germany), former ESA scientific staff, ESA/ESAC, Steckelsgasse 7, 69121 Heidelberg

John D. Rummel (USA), Friday Harbor Partners LLC, Friday Harbor, WA

Pascal Willis, (France), Formerly Institut Géographique National, Paris



COSPAR 2026 AWARDS

- Vikram Sarabhai Medal (a joint award of COSPAR and the Indian Space Research Organization) honoring Vikram Sarabhai, one of the architects of modern India, for outstanding contributions to space research in developing countries:

Annapurni Subramaniam (India), Director, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore, India

- Jeoujang Jaw Award (a joint award of COSPAR and the Chinese Academy of Sciences) recognizing scientists who have made distinguished pioneering contributions to promoting space research, establishing new space science research branches and founding new exploration programs:

ZHANG, Keke (Macau, China), Director, Macau Institute of Space Technology and Application, AV President, Macau University of Science and Technology

- COSPAR Outstanding Paper Awards for Young Scientists recognizes first authors under 31 years of age at the time of submission of the manuscript for publication in *Advances in Space Research (ASR)* or in *Life Sciences in Space Research (LSSR)*.

- [2025 Outstanding Paper Awards – ASR publication](#)
- [2025 Outstanding Paper Awards – LSSR publication](#)
- [2024 Outstanding Paper Awards – ASR publication](#)
- [2024 Outstanding Paper Awards – LSSR publication](#)

COSPAR Space Science Award

Angela Bazzano

Director Of Research, Associated to Istituto Di Astrofisica E Planetologia Spaziali, INAF, Area di Ricerca Roma 2-Tor Vergata, Via del Fosso del Cavaliere 100, 00133 Rome, Italy



Minor Planet (21038 Bazzano)

Angela Bazzano is Director of Research at the Institute of Space Astrophysics and Planetology (INAF) in Italy. Her research has been instrumental in the success of the IBIS imaging Telescope onboard the INTEGRAL gamma-ray observatory. She started her career as mission scientist of stratospheric balloon borne high energy experiments aimed at uncovering the nature of the gamma-ray emission and her studies involved also the analysis of the high energy sky with Exosat, BeppoSax and, later, with INTEGRAL. She provided an invaluable contribution to the definition of the scientific goals of the IBIS gamma-ray telescope onboard INTEGRAL, to its selection and, as a calibration scientist for IBIS, she contributed significantly to the outstanding performance of the instruments for more than two decades. As a leading scientist of the INTEGRAL “Survey Team”, she proposed and then contributed to implementing two fundamental projects for the mission success: the Galactic Plane Scanning and the All-Sky Survey. These core programs were key to revealing the nature of the soft gamma-ray galactic and extra-galactic sky. Her pioneering work on the high energy emission from the Galactic center has led to major new discoveries and opportunities to mentor many students. She had responsibilities in numerous international committees and community services. She has published 317 refereed papers since 1982 with more than 20,000 citations and an H-index of 52.



COSPAR 2026 AWARDS

COSPAR Space Science Award

Gary P. Zank

Aerojet-Rocketdyne Chair in Space Science and University of Alabama Board of Trustees Trustee Professor,
University of Alabama in Huntsville, Center for Space Plasma and Aeronomic Research and Dept. of Space Science,
Sparkman Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35899, USA



Minor Planet (21039 Zank)

Professor Gary P. Zank is selected for the 2026 COSPAR Space Science Award for his seminal advances in our understanding of the interaction of the solar wind with the interstellar medium; turbulence and waves in the solar wind; and acceleration and transport of particles throughout the heliosphere. He developed the first modern models describing the large-scale heliospheric interaction with the LISM in a series of highly cited and influential papers, beginning in 1995 and continuing to this day. This work includes predicting the existence of the Hydrogen-wall in the Sun's upstream very local interstellar medium and in front of other stars. Professor Zank also predicted that reflected interstellar pickup ions define the basic structure and dissipation mechanism for the heliospheric termination shock, as was subsequently confirmed by Voyager 2's shock crossing. He developed the first time-dependent model of solar energetic particle acceleration at shock waves and particle transport in the turbulent solar wind; predicted that turbulence in the solar wind is essentially a superposition of 2D (relative to the local mean magnetic field) and slab turbulence – a new paradigm for turbulence in the solar wind; and showed that the radial evolution of the magnetic fluctuation variance is governed by the dissipation of turbulence, completely changing the paradigm that had existed since the early 1970's. Professor Zank is a member of the US National Academy of Sciences and has won numerous other international awards and honors.

COSPAR International Cooperation Medal

Prof. Dr. Guenther Reitz

Professor, School of Radiation Medicine and Protection, Soochow University, Suzhou, China
Former Head Department of Radiation Biology, German Aerospace Center, Cologne, Germany



Minor Planet (21040 Güntherreitz)

Dr. Guenther Reitz is an internationally acknowledged leader in space radiation measurements and dosimetry. He has made seminal contributions in our understanding of the radiation conditions in human spaceflight missions, their



COSPAR 2026 AWARDS

biological consequences, and the resulting recommendations for space radiation protection. In this regard, Dr. Reitz is also the leading figure in many international collaborative projects focusing on radiation measurements, detection, as well as protection. He contributed to the original Biostack concept as project manager in the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project (ASTP), which succeeded in measuring the effects of individual heavy ions of cosmic rays for many biological systems. Since 1986, Dr. Reitz has been the Principal Investigator in numerous radiobiology and radiation dosimetry spaceflight experiments performed by international collaborative teams under the auspices of multiple space agencies including NASA, ESA, RSA and JAXA to name a few. Dr. Reitz has also organized for decades, as chairman since 1996, the international Workshop of Radiation Monitoring on the ISS. His Matroshka project involved 11 countries and 20 institutions around the world and measured, for the first time, the depth dose profile of cosmic radiation in a human phantom both inside and outside of the ISS. This project epitomizes the spirit of the COSPAR International Co-operation Medal and the decades of service to the international scientific community for which Dr. Guenther Reitz is recognized.

COSPAR William Nordberg Medal

David Gary Sibeck

Chief Scientist, Heliophysics, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt Road, Greenbelt, MD 20771, USA



Minor Planet (21042 Sibeck)

Dr. David G. Sibeck is honored for transformative contributions to our understanding of the solar wind–magnetosphere–ionosphere system and for pioneering applications of space science through innovative mission concepts and international collaboration. Over a career spanning more than four decades and more than 470 publications, he established the canonical framework describing how variable solar wind forcing drives magnetospheric dynamics and developed a widely used statistical description of the dayside magnetopause. His work revealed how transient solar wind structures produce global geospace responses, fundamentally advancing space weather science. Dr. Sibeck translated fundamental scientific insight into practice by aiding in the conception of multi-spacecraft observational strategies, most notably in designing science objectives for the THEMIS mission, which resolved the longstanding problem of substorm onset. He further opened a new observational window on geospace through soft X-ray imaging of solar wind charge exchange, enabling the international SMILE mission. Through these achievements, as well as his leadership in major NASA programs and international partnerships, Dr. Sibeck exemplifies the application of space research for the benefit of the global scientific community and embodies the spirit of COSPAR.



COSPAR 2026 AWARDS

COSPAR William Nordberg Medal

WANG Jinsong

Director-General, National Satellite Meteorological Center/National Center for Space Weather, China Meteorological Administration, No.46 Zhongguancun South Street, Haidian District, Beijing, China



IAU Minor Planet (21041 Wangjinsong)

Professor WANG Jinsong is a distinguished scientist in space physics and satellite meteorology, and a pioneering advocate in translating space science into practical global applications. A recipient of many national-level talent awards, he is widely recognized as a leading scholar in the field. As Director-General of the National Satellite Meteorological Center (National Center for Space Weather) (NSMC/NCSW) and Chief Designer of China's FengYun (FY) meteorological satellite program, he has achieved substantial progress in satellite technology and data application, bringing positive impacts to both China and the international community. Professor Wang established the FengYun constellation as a cornerstone of global space weather monitoring by leveraging cutting-edge solar-terrestrial space observation technologies and algorithms. Furthermore, under his guidance, the NCSW co-chaired the WMO's Space Weather Coordination Group and became one of the ICAO's designated Global Space Weather Centers, effectively enhancing the capacity of global space weather governance. Through the international cooperation programs of the China Meteorological Administration and his long-term participation in CN-COSPAR activities since 2004, Professor Wang has promoted the global sharing of his team's technological innovations and operational achievements, contributing to the improvement of global meteorological and space weather services to enhance the wellbeing of all mankind.

COSPAR Distinguished Service Medal

Carlos Gabriel

Former ESA scientific staff, ESA/ESAC, Steckelsgasse 7, 69121 Heidelberg



IAU Minor Planet (21045 Juangabriel)

Through sustained dedication to capacity building in space science, Carlos Gabriel has made outstanding contributions to one of COSPAR's most visible and impactful activities. For nearly twenty-five years, he has been deeply involved in the Panel on Capacity Building (PCB), serving as lecturer in workshops since 2001, Vice-Chair for Astronomy from 2010



COSPAR 2026 AWARDS

to 2018, and Chair of the Panel from 2018 to 2025. As Chair, Dr Gabriel strengthened and expanded the PCB into a truly global programme, reaching scientists across Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and broadening its scientific scope. He successfully guided the Panel through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring continuity of activities and reinforcing its structure through new initiatives such as alumni networks and fellowship schemes. He fostered collaborations with major international organisations, including the International Astronomical Union, ICTP, and UNOOSA, enhancing COSPAR's global visibility. He also initiated the Small Satellite programme, extending capacity building toward sustained institutional development in emerging space nations. Through his leadership, vision, and long-standing commitment, Carlos Gabriel has made exceptional and lasting contributions to COSPAR, fully embodying the spirit of the COSPAR Distinguished Service Medal.

COSPAR Distinguished Service Medal

John D. Rummel
Friday Harbor Partners LLC, Friday Harbor, WA, USA



IAU Minor Planet (21044 Rummel)

During his career with NASA and with his inception and leadership of COSPAR's Panel on Planetary Protection, Dr. Rummel was the most consequential and effective planetary protection (PP) voice for the entire community of spacefaring nations. His sixteen years at the helm of NASA's PP office were transformative, and with his fifteen-year leadership of the COSPAR Panel, they were filled with exceptional accomplishments. Dr. Rummel fully internationalized the field of PP, making COSPAR the arbiter of PP matters and the highest reviewing body of the implementation of PP requirements by launching nations. He led the refinement of PP requirements for the outer planets and satellites; the development of the first PP requirements for Mars Sample Return missions; and the crafting of the first set of guidelines for human missions to Mars. In the latter, the Panel laid the foundation for the comprehensive and mission-enabling requirements adopted by COSPAR in 2008, and now being extended and supported by COSPAR and the international community. These remarkable accomplishments were made possible by a series of pivotal COSPAR Workshops, Colloquia, and Symposia that brought together international scientists, project managers and engineers, policy experts, and legal professionals. He utilized the advice of expert panels of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and equivalent international authorities, when available—including joint meetings with space agencies, with IAU, IISL, and PEX, and recognition by the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. With COSPAR as the venue for resolving disputes and providing guidance, science could be applied to aid mission planners and operators as a service to both. One example was in planning for the Japanese Muses-C/Hayabusa asteroid sample return mission, and whether a landing in Woomera would be safe. Dr. Rummel organized a COSPAR/IAU Workshop in part to address that question. That workshop recommended an "unrestricted Earth return" categorization for the mission. Subsequently Hayabusa was approved for landing in Woomera by both Environment Australia and Biosecurity Australia. There and elsewhere, Dr. Rummel's commitment to service, his impressive curriculum vitae and long list of awards and publications reflect a brilliant career by a gifted, principled, and driven scientist and leader.



COSPAR 2026 AWARDS

COSPAR Distinguished Service Medal

Pascal Willis
Formerly Institut Géographique National, Paris, France



Minor Planet (21043 Pascalwillis)

Dr. Pascal Willis joined the Institut Géographique National in Paris in 1983 and worked as visiting scientist for many years at Jet Propulsion Laboratory and later at the Institute de Physique du Globe de Paris. His research was focused on space geodesy, in particular on the French DORIS system. He was co-founder of the International DORIS Service in 2003 and chair of its Governing Board for many years. He served COSPAR as vice-chair and chair (2004- 2016) of the Technical Panel on Satellite Dynamics.

Early in his career he began serving as associate and guest editor for several journals. In 2009 he became involved in the editorial work for the COSPAR publication *Advances in Space Research*, which he successfully led with great commitment as Editor-in-Chief from 2014 to 2025, increasing its impact factor, improving its publication time and strengthening the reputation of this COSPAR journal.

Joint COSPAR / Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Vikram Sarabhai Medal

for outstanding contributions to space research in developing countries

Annapurni Subramaniam
Director, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bangalore, India



Professor Annapurni Subramaniam, Director of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru, is an eminent astrophysicist recognised for her pioneering contributions to the physics of single and binary stars, star clusters, nearby galaxies, and space-based ultraviolet astronomy. After obtaining her PhD from Bangalore University in 1996, she rose through the academic ranks to become the first woman Director of IIA in 2019. Her research on the Magellanic Clouds, star formation, and stellar populations has significantly advanced our understanding of the structure and evolution of nearby galaxies.



COSPAR 2026 AWARDS

Professor Subramaniam has played a major leadership role in India's space astronomy programme. She was the calibration scientist for the UltraViolet Imaging Telescope (UVIT) onboard AstroSat, India's first multi-wavelength space observatory, and led its in-orbit calibration and performance verification. Her research using UVIT established important formation pathways of blue straggler stars and identified diverse stellar debris produced through binary evolution. She currently leads the proposed next-generation UV-optical space telescope mission, INSIST, and has also contributed significantly to India's participation in the Thirty Meter Telescope (TMT) international project.

Beyond research, Professor Subramaniam has provided distinguished scientific leadership through national and international initiatives, including the establishment of the Hanle Dark Sky Reserve and the promotion of astro-tourism in Ladakh. She serves in several important roles within the International Astronomical Union and Indian science academies. Honoured with the inaugural Vigyan Shri in Space Science and Technology, Professor Annapurni Subramaniam is a highly deserving recipient of the COSPAR Vikram Sarabhai Medal for 2026.

Joint COSPAR / Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) Jeoujang Jaw Award

for pioneering contributions to promoting space research, establishing new space science research branches and founding new exploration programs.

ZHANG Keke

Director, Macau Institute of Space Technology and Application, AV President, Macau University of Science and Technology, Macau, China



Professor Keke Zhang is a distinguished space and planetary scientist, internationally recognized for over three decades of outstanding and pioneering contributions to advancing space planetary research. His major scientific achievements encompass a wide range of topics, including planetary convection, convection-driven dynamo theory and simulation, magnetohydrodynamic instabilities, planetary waves, gravitation inverse problems, the shape of giant planets, geomagnetic satellites, and geomagnetic data analysis and modeling. Working independently and with collaborators, Professor Zhang has constructed the world's first fully nonlinear convection-driven dynamo for terrestrial planets; proposed a two-layered explanation for the formation of zonal flow observed on Jupiter's atmosphere by the Galileo mission; derived the first fully analytical 3-D thermal convection solution for planetary fluid cores; developed the internal dynamo and structure of Jupiter's moon Ganymede revealed by the Galileo mission; published the first explicitly analytical inertial waves for rotating planetary systems; derived the thermal-gravitational wind equation for interpreting the wind-induced gravitational signature of Jupiter measured by the Juno spacecraft; and established a unified asymptotic theory for inertial waves, thermal convection, precession and libration, laying a fundamental theoretical basis for explaining many phenomena in space and planetary systems. Since 2020, as the Principal Investigator and Chief Scientist for the Macau Science Satellite-1 (MSS-1) — the world's first low-latitude geomagnetic satellite launched in 2023 with the best local-time coverage — he has initiated, designed, implemented, managed, and led the internationally successful MSS-1 mission, whose highly accurate magnetic data are widely used in scientific research to understand Earth's coupled system from its core to its magnetosphere. For these transformative scientific and leadership accomplishments, Professor Zhang is most deserving of CAS/COSPAR Jeoujang Jaw Award.



COSPAR 2026 AWARDS

Outstanding Paper Award for Young Scientists 2024 and 2025

- [2025 Outstanding Paper Awards – ASR publication](#)
- [2025 Outstanding Paper Awards – LSSR publication](#)
- [2024 Outstanding Paper Awards – ASR publication](#)
- [2024 Outstanding Paper Awards – LSSR publication](#)

COSPAR TODAY

COSPAR, the largest international scientific society dedicated to promoting global cooperation in space research, was established in 1958. It serves as a neutral platform for scientific dialogue among scientists from around the world. Today, COSPAR comprises 49 national scientific institutions and 13 international scientific unions, with 14,000 space scientists actively participating in its activities, including attending Scientific Assemblies, contributing to panels and roadmaps, and publishing in its journals.

COSPAR's core mission is to facilitate dialogue and encourage international collaboration among space stakeholders across the globe. It operates through scientific commissions, panels and task groups that encompass all disciplines of space science, from Earth and atmospheric sciences to planetary science, astrophysics, solar and space plasma physics, and life and microgravity sciences. A recent focus has been on strengthening ties between science and industry. This was achieved by forming the Committee on Industry Relations, which includes 16 leading aerospace companies worldwide. The Committee advises COSPAR on integrating industry capabilities into its activities, ensuring mutual benefits for both science and industry.

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