

AEESP Newsletter

Published three times yearly by the Association of Environmental Engineering & Science Professors

October 2026

VOLUME 61 No. 3

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Need to renew your AEESP membership? Go to "Membership > Renew My AEESP Membership" on the AEESP Website: AEESP.org

AEESP Newsletter Submissions

Please send news, conference announcements, job postings, letters to the editor, and other contributions to the Newsletter to Kyle Doudrick at kdoudrick@nd.edu. The next Newsletter will appear in February 2027.

President's Letter: Building Community

By José M. Cerrato Corrales, Ph.D.
University of New Mexico



Dear AEESP community,

I truly appreciate our amazing community of the Association of Environmental Engineering and Science Professors (AEESP), which includes members located in the United States and abroad. During our virtual Awards Ceremony in June, I delivered a Presidential address to more than 70 attendees, which serves as the basis for this message. It really moves me that many friends have already generously supported me with great ideas to continue growing our community and coming together as an Association. I encourage you to please know that you can contact me anytime to share your ideas as we try to address ongoing challenges that we are all experiencing these days.

I was energized by the recent AEESP Board of Directors Meeting, which I had the pleasure to host at the University of New Mexico from September 9th to 11th and which marked the start of my term as President. During this meeting, we had the pleasure of welcoming new Board members Nicole Fahrenfeld, Pablo Cornejo and Zhiyong (Jason) Ren, who were highlighted in the summary prepared by Vice President Nirupam Aich. We also recognized the invaluable services of Kara Nelson, Past President, for her work inspiring and promoting initiatives for public engagement (Policy Tool Kit Taskforce), international connections, and evaluation of our progress towards addressing the Grand Challenges in Environmental Engineering. We are thankful for the service of Judy Zhang, Past Secretary and Belinda Sturm, Past Chief Information Officer, who continues her service as Board Member and Secretary of the AEESP Foundation. As our work together continues, we will support these initiatives and previous efforts initiated by former Presidents such as the Communities of Practice and Experts Programs (led by Lee Blaney), which strengthen our community.

Past President Debora Rodrigues initiated an effort to increase our international reach, a priority which we will continue to address. We truly appreciate the leadership of President-Elect Andrew Jackson, Secretary David Ladner, Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Edwards, Chief Technology Officer Randi Brazeau, and Treasurer Lindsay Soh as we continue to lead various initiatives through the AEESP Board of Directors that contribute to build community.

One of the most important things we need to do is stay together as a strong community; AEESP is a unique group as one of the few associations whose members are primarily Professors. Our junior faculty members play a very important role, and I want to encourage your enthusiasm and energy in support of them and their work. You should feel free to volunteer, reach out, and contribute your innovative ideas. Remember that our profession has a very important mission of "saving human lives" through our science and engineering. More than ever, it is important that the public and our decision-makers know our mission and purpose is to protect the well-being of our communities. I will continue outreach to our AEESP Committees, Communities of Practice, and other groups to not only strengthen our internal AEESP activities, but also to strategize on how we effectively build connections and networks outside of our association to benefit our scientific community as a whole. We need to make sure that we are advocating for the importance of funding for research, education, and service that our community provides to the world. We can work openly and collaboratively to communicate the importance of our work with other associations such as the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists (AAEES); the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM); and other societies where many of our AEESP members also contribute. It is necessary to work together to re-evaluate our Environmental Science and Engineering curriculum to strengthen the future workforce

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The AEESP Newsletter is published three times a year in February, July, and October by the Association of Environmental Engineering and Science Professors. Issues are published online at:

www.aeesp.org/news/newsletter-archive

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AEESP Membership Application:

www.aeesp.org/membership

President's Letter (cont.)

as we think of integration of data science and artificial intelligence (AI). Supporting systems thinking approaches that benefit the public sector, and industry is another critical need. Our community needs to pro-actively work to modernize our curriculum and prepare for evolving changes in our profession, while complying with the requirements necessary for ABET accreditation. These are all priorities that will guide my time as the President of AEESP.

In addition to this work, I also plan to revisit initiatives from Past Presidents, including holding periodic virtual meetings throughout the year to talk openly about topics relevant to our community. For example, we would like to discuss the National Science Foundation (NSF) Directorate of Engineering so our community, and especially our junior faculty, can benefit from a transparent process where everyone can learn about the scope and opportunities available through NSF and other federal agencies. Our community also needs to talk openly about Promotion and Tenure. As we are all working together to sustain this community, it is important for our junior colleagues to stay strong and keep going! We also hope to facilitate opportunities for leadership development for Associate Professors and Mid-career colleagues who are an essential core of our community. Continuing to build Professional Partnerships is a priority for AEESP, particularly as we build collaboration with industry to foster innovation for workforce development, education, scientific, and technological advancement. I hope these periodic virtual meetings can stimulate and prepare us to effectively engage at the AEESP 2027 Conference at The University of Texas at Austin. I truly thank Conference Chair Lynn Katz, Co-Chairs Mary Jo Kirisits, and Courtney Gardner, and Symposia, Workshops & Sessions Committee Co-Chairs: Xavier Fonoll Almansa and Qilin Li for their efforts and coordination. We appreciate the collaboration of The University of Texas at Austin, Rice University, Texas Tech University, Texas A&M University, Lamar University, Texas State University, University of Houston, Baylor University, Texas A&M University Kingsville, University of Texas at El Paso, and Prairie View A&M University for such an exciting opportunity to host our AEESP Community on May 18-20, 2027 in Austin, TX!

I am excited to work with Professor Venkataramana (Ramana) Gadhamshetty, Editor-in-Chief of *Environmental Engineering Science*, official journal of AEESP. We have developed a long-standing partnership and friendship cemented on our mutual passion to best serve our Environmental Engineering and Science community. We are committed to enabling strategic ties between the journal and AEESP.

I want to leave this address "short and sweet" inspired by the spirit of my virtual address, but I really want to encourage you to please reach out if there are any blind spots in our community or among AEESP leadership. Don't be shy, please contact me at any time via email (jcerrato@unm.edu).

Thank you, my dear colleagues, and we will keep working together,

Respectfully submitted by José M. Cerrato
2026-27 AEESP President

Breaking News from the Internet Resources Committee

By Yalin Li, Ph.D., Chair, AEESP Internet Resources Committee, Rutgers University

The AEESP Internet Resources Committee is excited to welcome several new members and announce new leadership roles for the coming year.

Welcome to our newest committee member:

- **Dr. Mei Sun**, Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, joins the committee as our new **Listserv Manager**.

New committee roles:

- **Chair:** Dr. Yalin Li, Rutgers University
- **Webmaster:** Dr. Arafat Ali, Jacobs
- **Social Media Coordinator:** Dr. Gordon Getzinger, Loyola University Chicago
- **Social Media Assistant:** Van Stillson, Syracuse University
- **Ad Hoc Conference Liaison:** Dr. Garrett McKay, Texas A&M University

We are also excited to introduce a new group of **Social Media Ambassadors** who will be taking over AEESP's social media accounts in the coming months. Keep an eye out for posts and updates from:

- **Dr. Sidan Lu**, Rice University
- **Dr. Junke Zhang**, Tennessee State University
- **Dr. Samendra Sherchan**, Morgan State University
- **Dr. Amit Kumar**, MNIT Jaipur

We look forward to highlighting the work, research, and perspectives of AEESP members across our online platforms and continuing to strengthen communication and engagement throughout the community.

Connect with AEESP

AEESP on LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/company/aeesp
or Search: "AEESP" on LinkedIn.com

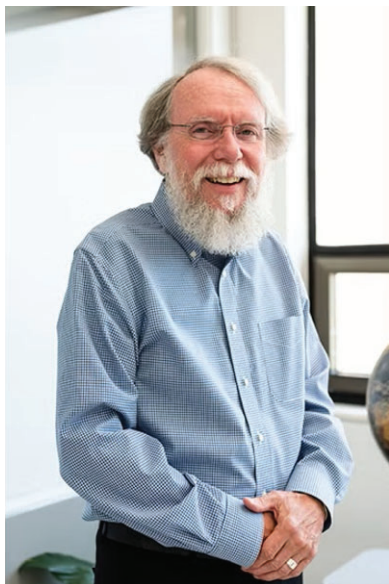


AEESP on Bluesky

[@aeesprofs.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/aeesprofs.bsky.social)
or Search: "AEESP" on bsky.app



AEESP Community of Practice: Standing on the Shoulders (S.o.S.) Giants Conversation with Dr. Desmond Lawler



The latest AEESP S.o.S. Giants conversation, held in August 2026, featured Dr. Desmond Lawler, Professor Emeritus of Environmental Engineering at the University of Texas at Austin. In a discussion led by Matt Landsman (Arizona State University) and Stetson Rowles (Georgia Southern University), Dr. Lawler reflected on a 41-year career at UT.

Dr. Lawler began by describing a career path that was less direct than one might expect. Although he came from a family with several civil engineers, he finished his undergraduate degree at Notre Dame thinking he would “never do civil engineering again.” During the Vietnam War era, he spent several years doing draft counseling and related legal work in Kansas City, then took a job painting a house to give himself time to think about what should come next. He eventually returned to the one part of civil engineering he had enjoyed: environmental engineering. Graduate study at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill convinced him that academia was the right place for him because it used “a lot of who I am,” bringing together intellectual work, teaching, mentorship, and personal engagement.

Teaching was one of the strongest themes of the conversation. Dr. Lawler described good teaching as both “personally supportive” and “intellectually challenging,” a balance he believes matters from kindergarten through graduate school. His classroom mantra was simple: “class time is thinking time.” Rather than using lectures only to deliver information, he structured class periods around questions, pauses, and discussion that pushed students to reason through problems for themselves. Former students on the call remembered the intensity of that experience, but also that the challenge was rooted in care. The same commitment shaped *Water Quality Engineering*, the textbook he wrote with Dr. Mark Benjamin to extend that kind of learning beyond his own classroom. The work pushed both authors into unfamiliar topics, and Dr. Lawler recalled spending several weeks learning flotation well enough to write a relatively short section of the book.

The conversation also centered on what former students know as Lawler’s three rules. The first, “When in doubt, perform a mass balance,” grew out of his preparation for PhD comprehensive exams, when he realized that memorization would not be enough and that many environmental engineering problems could be connected through first principles. He later built exams around that idea, asking students to apply mass balances in unfamiliar situations and reason from fundamentals. The second rule, “Don’t leave until you are finished,” came from watching students take jobs before completing theses or dissertations, only to find that the final stretch took far longer after they left campus. The rule was a way of protecting students from a predictable trap. The third, “If you are putting in the time, you are making progress,” reflected his view of research as a process that often includes feeling lost.

In those uncertain stretches, Dr. Lawler saw part of his role as being a cheerleader, someone who helped students believe the next step was still possible even when progress was hard to see. Asked how he made students feel seen, his answer was direct: he believed they belonged. They had already demonstrated in their applications that they could be there; his job was to pay attention, listen carefully, and bring out their best. He recalled a former student thanking him years later with four words: “You believed in me.” That same attention shaped the community he helped build at UT Austin through student support, recruiting, faculty hiring, and a willingness to have difficult conversations when change was needed.

Near the end of the conversation, Dr. Lawler was asked what made him most proud. He named two things before his research papers: his students and the textbook. More than 30 PhD students and approximately 100 MS students worked with him, many going on to influential careers in academia, research, consulting, and utility leadership. He highlighted former master’s students who later directed or helped lead major water systems in Austin, Minneapolis, and Tacoma. The textbook, he said, was a way of educating classrooms around the world, not just his own. Across the conversation, Dr. Lawler returned to helping students think deeply, persist through uncertainty, and recognize that they belong. His career showed how intellectual rigor and genuine care can reinforce one another, and how a professional legacy is built not only through papers and technical contributions, but through the people one teaches, mentors, challenges, and supports.

S.o.S. Giants: Dr. Desmond Lawler (cont.)

S.o.S. Giants Community of Practice

The Standing on the Shoulders of Giants (S.o.S. Giants) Community of Practice was established within AEESP to create a dedicated space for personal and professional reflection that is distinct from traditional research seminars. The community's goal is to facilitate conversations that highlight the people behind the science, spotlighting formative experiences, personal values, career challenges, and lessons learned from leaders across the field. S.o.S. Giants is organized by a team of early- and mid-career faculty volunteers and is envisioned as a recurring series open to all AEESP members, with each session featuring an invited "giant" whose experiences can support intergenerational learning and mentorship across the community.

Link to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4M6_tEvjXo

Date: August 19, 2026



Professional Partnerships Committee (PPC)

CONNECTING ACADEMIA & PRACTICE

Bringing together the academic and professional environmental engineering communities to strengthen education, research, and engineering practice.



Fabrizio Sabba
Syracuse University



Joshua Jack
Univ. of Michigan



Julie Konzuk
Geosyntec



Kerry Howe
Howe Water Science,
University of New Mexico



Paul Erickson
Regenesis

JOIN THE PPC!

We're expanding the PPC! Join AEESP colleagues working to strengthen partnerships between academia and the environmental engineering profession.



CONNECT

Bridge academia and industry



COLLABORATE

Advance research and education



ENGAGE

Foster networking and mentorship

Help connect academia and practice!

Help shape the next chapter of AEESP's Academic-professional partnerships.



Learn more and join us:

fsabba@syr.edu

All AEESP members are welcome!

BRIDGING RESEARCH, EDUCATION & PRACTICE

Report from the Fall 2026 AEESP Board Meeting

By Nirupam Aich, Ph.D., AEESP Vice President, University of Nebraska–Lincoln



The AEESP Board of Directors gathered September 10–11, 2026, at the University of New Mexico (UNM) for our annual fall meeting, with several Board members joining remotely. Many thanks to Dr. José M. Cerrato and our UNM colleagues for hosting the meeting and creating a welcoming setting for two productive days of discussion. As in past years,

the fall meeting provided an important opportunity for outgoing and incoming leadership to overlap, reflect on progress during the past year, and establish priorities for the year ahead.

A major part of the fall meeting is the transition of AEESP leadership. Dr. Kara Nelson completed her term as President, and Dr. José Cerrato assumed the role of President by acclamation. Dr. Andrew Jackson was unanimously elected President-Elect. I am honored to have been elected Vice President following a ballot vote. Dr. David Ladner was elected Secretary, Dr. Elizabeth Edwards was elected Chief Information Officer, and Dr. Lindsay Soh continues as Treasurer. Elizabeth was also appointed to fill one of two open seats on the AEESP Foundation Board beginning January 1, 2027. Andrew will represent the AEESP Board in the role of liaison within the AEESP Foundation Board.

Brian Schorr provided the Business Office report. AEESP had **903 members in good standing** as of August 18. The Board discussed continued efforts to strengthen membership engagement, including Sustaining Members who we recognize as key Professional Partners and increase use of the AEESP Job Board. The AEESP Board of Directors and related Committees encourage posting new job openings (e.g., faculty, industry, or administrator positions) at the Job Board on the AEESP website due to its value reaching to our members in the job market (e.g., graduate students or postdoctoral scholars) enabling the recruitment of the best environmental engineering and science professionals.

One particularly exciting step toward expanding AEESP's international reach was the Board's unanimous approval of a **new tiered structure for members residing in low- and middle-income countries**. The structure is based on the [World Bank country-income classifications](#) to provide reduced membership rates and will be implemented for the 2027 membership year. This builds on AEESP's growing international engagement, including In-

ternational Spotlight features in the newsletter and developing connections with organizations and communities around the world. The Board hopes these efforts will make participation in AEESP more accessible while strengthening the international perspectives represented within our community.

We also received an extensive update on the **2027 AEESP Research and Education Conference**, scheduled for May 18–20, 2027. Planning is well underway under the leadership of Dr. Lynn Katz from the University of Texas at Austin and a broad multi-institutional organizing team. Approximately 1,000 attendees are anticipated, and more than 100 student volunteers have already expressed interest. Twelve (12) active planning committees involving representatives from ten (10) co-host institutions are helping organize the conference. Abstract submissions are expected to open in November 2026 and remain open through January 2027, with early registration beginning January 28, 2027. We are looking forward to another outstanding gathering of the AEESP community.

José shared his priorities as President for 2026–27, emphasizing the importance of reaching both **within and beyond AEESP**, strengthening our professional community through periodic virtual and in-person engagement, and creating spaces for members to discuss timely issues. Among the topics identified for future conversations were opportunities for federal research funding, promotion and tenure, and reevaluating environmental engineering curricula to ensure that our programs continue preparing the workforce needed for the future.

The Board also discussed several organizational changes intended to strengthen AEESP's committees and external



President José Cerrato entertains the AEESP Board with his talented guitar skills.

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Fall 2026 Board Meeting Report (cont.)

partnerships. The former Sustaining Members Engagement Committee was unanimously renamed the **Professional Partnerships Committee**, reflecting its broader mission of building stronger connections between academia, industry, consulting, utilities, government, and other professional sectors. The committee is developing activities to strengthen academia–practice partnerships and is planning a workshop for the 2027 conference. Similarly, the Board renamed the former “Liaison of the Liaisons” role as the **External Organization Outreach Coordinator**, a title that better reflects its purpose of strengthening AEESP’s connections with external professional organizations. Discussions are already underway regarding opportunities for greater collaboration with organizations such as the Air & Waste Management Association, including potential joint webinars, workshops, conference activities, and programming on topics ranging from air quality and climate change to emerging monitoring technologies and AI applications in environmental systems. Committee leadership, continuity, and suc-

cession planning were recurring themes throughout the meeting. The Board discussed ways to encourage stronger leadership pipelines within committees, including chair/co-chair structures where appropriate, clearer committee rosters, and better transitions between leadership teams.

Several member-focused programs continue to grow. The Membership and Demographics Committee is working on a faculty mentoring program, membership demographic analyses, a student presenter mentoring program, and programs matching first-time and international conference attendees with other AEESP members. The Student and Postdoctoral Services Committee continues its Academic Job Application Review Program and the AEESP Future Faculty Seminar Series, while the Education Committee is working to make laboratory manual resources more readily available online. The Board also discussed ways to increase participation in the AEESP Student CV Database and connect students and postdoctoral researchers with potential employers.



(Left to Right): Judy Zhang, Lindsay Soh, Nicole Fahrenfeld, W. Andrew Jackson, Kara Nelson, José Cerrato, Brian Schorr, Randi Brazeau, Elizabeth Edwards, Pablo Cornejo, David Ladner, Jason Ren. (Not pictured: Nirupam Aich and Belinda Sturm.)

Fall 2026 Board Meeting Report (cont.)

AEESP is also continuing several initiatives aimed at increasing the public impact of environmental engineering and science. The **Grand Challenges Task Force** led by Dr. Kara Nelson is assessing progress since AEESP's Grand Challenges were originally articulated, including analysis of more than 51,000 publications by AEESP members and relevant NSF-funded research. A workshop associated with this effort is being developed for the 2027 conference. Meanwhile, the **Policy Toolkit Task Force** has been interviewing AEESP members engaged in policy-related work and compiling resources to help researchers communicate their expertise, participate effectively in policy discussions, and receive appropriate professional recognition for this work.

AEESP members will also continue to have opportunities to engage with outstanding leaders in our field through our lecture programs. Upcoming activities include the WEFTEC Master Lecture featuring **Dr. Jose Jimenez from Brown and Caldwell**, the AEESP Plenary Lecture at the AAAR Conference featuring **Dr. Rick Flagan from Caltech**, and the AWWA Water Quality Technology Conference Emerging Investigator Lecture featuring **Dr. Alex Gorzalski of One Water Engineering**. We are also delighted that **Professor Catherine Peters of Princeton University** is serving as the AEESP Distinguished Lecturer.

The breadth of activities discussed during the meeting reflects the extraordinary energy that AEESP members contribute to our organization as committee members and leaders, conference organizers, mentors, lecturers, volunteers, and partners. As I begin my service as Vice President, I am especially excited about working with José, Andrew, the Board, our committees, and the broader AEESP community to build on this momentum. I look forward to listening to our members, strengthening opportunities for engagement across career stages and professional sectors, and helping AEESP continue to serve as an inclusive and forward-looking home for environmental engineering and science.



Respectfully reported by Nirupam Aich, Vice President, AEESP, Richard L. McNeel Associate Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Attending AAAR 2026?

We are pleased to announce Dr. Rick Flagan will provide this year's AEESP Plenary Lecture!

AAAR 44th Annual Conference: *The Great Smog Caper*

Richard Flagan, Ph.D.
Professor of Chemical Engineering and Environmental Science and Engineering
California Institute of Technology
Tuesday, October 27; 8 am PT
Pasadena Convention Center

Organized by AAAR; Pasadena, CA

[View Conference Website and Register](#)



**American Association
for Aerosol Research**



AEESP Activities at WEFTEC 2026

AEESP would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for helping make our participation in the 2026 WEFTEC Conference in New Orleans a success:

- **Water Environment Federation**, AEESP Sustaining Member, for their partnership in organizing the Annual Meet and Greet reception and the Master Lecture. Laura Herman and Nancy Li provided invaluable support.
- **Carollo Engineers**, AEESP Sustaining Member, for sponsoring the Annual Meet and Greet reception.
- **Dr. Jose Jimenez**, Director of Wastewater Process Practice and National Technology Innovation Leader at Brown and Caldwell, the AEESP Master Lecturer, for his presentation "From Ideas to Implementation: Advancing Water Innovation Through Collaboration"
- **Prof. Diego Rosso**, University of California, Irvine, for introducing Dr. Jimenez.
- **Dr. Pusker Regmi**, VP & Wastewater Sector Leader, Stantec, for chairing the AEESP Master Lecture session.
- **All AEESP members** who joined President José Cerrato and participated in these two sessions.

The following photos were taken during the Annual Meet and Greet and Master Lecture, both held on Monday, September 28th. For more photos of AEESP's events at WEFTEC, please visit our [LinkedIn page](#).



Left to Right: José Cerrato, Pusker Regmi, Jose Jimenez, Diego Rosso, Murthy Kasi, Nicole Fahrenfeld



Dr. Jose Jimenez speaks during the AEESP Master Lecture Session.



AEESP President José Cerrato welcomes members to the annual Meet and Greet Reception.



AEESP members gather at this year's annual Meet and Greet Reception.

AEESP 2027 Conference Planning Update: Proposal Submissions and Review Timeline



As planning for the [AEESP 2027 Conference](#) moves forward, we're pleased to share an update on the call for technical sessions, symposia, and workshops. The planning committee has received more than 70 proposals so far, a strong sign of our community's engagement ahead of next year's meeting. Submissions span all five conference priority areas: AI and machine learning; the water-energy-data center nexus; critical minerals recovery; the circular water economy; and quantum information science. Core AEESP strengths are also well represented, including PFAS and emerging contaminants, environmental microbiology and biotechnology, drinking water and wastewater treatment, environmental health and the microbiome, environmental chemistry, agricultural and food systems, and solid waste management. Many proposals also cut across disciplines, with notable interest in industry-academic partnerships, pedagogy and curriculum, community-engaged research, career development, and international collaboration.

Proposal review will begin after the October 5 deadline, and the planning committee expects to release decisions approximately two weeks after the deadline. Thank you to everyone who has submitted so far. We look forward to building an exciting program together.

With appreciation,

Lynn Katz, Mary Jo Kirisits, and Courtney Gardner
AEESP 2027 Conference Directors

Join AEESP at the 2026 AWWA Water Quality Technology Conference

AEESP Emerging Investigator Lecture
PFAS Desorption in GAC, PAC, & IX: Implications for
Sorbent Design, System Operation, and Residuals Handling

Alexander S. Gorzalski, PhD, PE, PO
Founder, One Water Engineering
Monday, November 16; 4 pm CT; Memphis, TN
Organized by AWWA; Sponsored by Corona Environmental Consulting
[View Conference Website and Register](#)



ACS Division of Environmental Chemistry Establishes Three New Awards

By Lee Blaney, Ph.D., and Alexander Orlov, Ph.D.

The American Chemical Society (ACS) Division of Environmental Chemistry (ENVR) proudly recognizes remarkable contributions from undergraduate students, graduate students, professors, professionals, and first-time presenters at the biannual national meetings. You can find descriptions of each award on our website (<https://acsenvr.com/awards-overview>). To honor the impact of their work, we encourage you to consider nominating your students, faculty, and colleagues for these prestigious awards this fall.

In 2025, ACS ENVR established three new awards to recognize and honor the outstanding research, engagement, and service contributions of ENVR members to the greater environmental community. The inaugural winners of these awards are also AEESP members. Please join us in congratulating the following awardees on their achievements.

The **Dionysios Dionysiou Established Investigator Award** was established to honor the exceptional service and leadership of Prof. Dionysios (Dion) Demetriou Dionysiou (1966-2023) to ACS ENVR and for his outstanding research contributions in the exploration of innovative technologies for water treatment. The award recognizes sustained and distinguished contributions to the field of environmental chemistry by mid-career and established investigators with 10-30 years of experience beyond their graduate and postdoctoral appointments.



2026 Awardee: Dr. Amisha Shah, Associate Professor of Civil and Construction Engineering and Sustainability Engineering and Environmental Engineering, Purdue University

Dr. Amisha Shah was selected as the inaugural ACS ENVR *Dionysios Dionysiou Established Investigator Awardee* for her outstanding contributions to research in environmental chemistry and the impact of

her service to the environmental community. She has made outstanding research contributions through a creative interdisciplinary research program investigating the impacts of drinking water and wastewater quality on public health. Dr. Shah has also made significant impacts to the environmental chemistry community through her dedicated service and exceptional mentorship. We congratulate Dr. Shah on this well-deserved recognition and look forward to her future contributions to the Division.

The **Environmental Chemistry Engagement and Impact Award** recognizes outstanding contributions by indi-

viduals or teams who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, creativity, and impact in advancing engagement in environmental chemistry and engineering.



2026 Awardee: Dr. Wen Zhang, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, New Jersey Institute of Technology

Dr. Wen Zhang, the inaugural ACS ENVR *Environmental Chemistry Engagement and Impact Awardee*, is recognized for his innovative research in water treatment and contributions to the scientific community through productive partnerships with community organizations, government agencies,

industry, academic collaborators, and local stakeholders. Within the Division, Dr. Zhang has contributed service by organizing and chairing symposia focused on water treatment, sustainability, emerging environmental technologies, and the water-energy nexus. His work exemplifies how environmental chemistry connects scientific discovery, technology translation, student mentorship, and public engagement. We congratulate Dr. Zhang on this well-deserved recognition.

The **Rising Star in Environmental Chemistry Award** honors early-career investigators who have demonstrated outstanding promise for research contributions in environmental chemistry and impactful service to ACS ENVR.



2026 Awardee: Dr. Xing Xie, Carlton S. Wilder Associate Professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology

Dr. Xing Xie was selected as the inaugural ACS ENVR *Rising Star in Environmental Chemistry Awardee* for inventing innovative materials, processes, and devices for water treatment applications and providing dedicated service to the Division. His

research contributions include a novel disinfection technology, locally enhanced electric field treatment, and superabsorbent polymer beads for filtration, microalgae harvesting, and sample preservation applications. He has helped to shape conference programming and foster community engagement by organizing 10 symposia at ACS National Meetings. We congratulate Dr. Xie on this well-deserved recognition and look forward to his future contributions.

Results from the 2025-26 Member Demographics Survey

In the tables below, we present the responses from AEESP's membership survey recorded from November 2025 to September 2026. This survey is completed at the time of membership renewal and although it is optional, we strongly encourage all members to complete it so that the results reflect our entire membership. To ensure transparency and assist with the work of individual members and AEESP committees, the aggregate survey data are reported each fall. The same 14-question survey has been used for four years. This year, 292 respondents completed the survey, compared to 280 in 2025, 326 in 2024 and 383 in 2023. The Board continues working with the Membership and Demographics Committee to undertake an analysis of trends over time.

As additional background, the survey was developed through a partnership with the Board and the Membership and Demographics Committee, using best practices learned through our engagement with ACCESS+ (<https://accessplusstem.com/>), which is an NSF ADVANCE funded partnership that aims to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in professional societies. The drivers for this survey were to (i) determine which institution types, research areas, and roles are well- and under-represented in AEESP, (ii) improve understanding of the personal demographics of environmental engineers and scientists, and (iii) highlight opportunities for engaging and recruiting new members.

The Board appreciates the efforts of Past President Lee Blaney to institutionalize the annual reporting and to Executive Administrator Brian Schorr for compiling the survey results. To ensure confidentiality, categories selected by less than 1% of the respondents are labeled as "< 4".

Professional Information

1. Describe your employer? (select all that apply)	Count
Academic institution	279
Industry, consulting firm	6
Government agency or national laboratory	8
Nonprofit or nongovernmental organization	1
Self employed	2
Not currently employed	2
Prefer not to say	0
Prefer to self-describe	2

2. If you work at an academic institution, which type do you work at? (select all that apply)	Count
Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institution	14
Associate's College (Community College)	1
Doctoral University: Very High Research Activity (R1)	224
Doctoral University: High Research Activity (R2)	20
Doctoral/Professional University (R3)	5
Hispanic Serving Institution	15
Historically Black College and University	0
International institution (not based in the United States)	12
Master's College or University	4
Minority Serving Institution	7
Predominantly Undergraduate Institution	17
Predominantly White Institution	11
Tribal College and University	0
Unknown	0
Prefer not to say	3
I do not work in an academic institution	12

3. If you work at an academic institution, what undergraduate degrees does your department administer? (select all that apply)	Count
Environmental Engineering	143
Civil Engineering	161
Civil and Environmental Engineering	58
Chemical Engineering	43
Construction Engineering	29
Environmental Science	49
I am not in an academic institution	9
Prefer not to say	1
Prefer to self-describe	36

4. If you work at an academic institution, what graduate degrees does your department administer? (select all that apply)	Count
Environmental Engineering	118
Civil Engineering	144
Civil and Environmental Engineering	78
Chemical Engineering	39
Construction Engineering	22
Environmental Science	49
I am not in an academic institution	9
Prefer not to say	2
Prefer to self-describe	43

5. Which media do you focus on in your research or professional activities? (select all that apply)	Count
Air	33
Built environment	0
Energy	50
Food	27
Soil/sediment	89
Water/wastewater	258
Prefer not to say	3
Prefer to self-describe	14

6. What types of research do you focus on? (select all that apply)	Count
Community engaged	68
Educational/teaching	53
Experimental	242
Modeling/computational	128
Prefer not to say	4
Prefer to self-describe	6

Member Demographics Survey (cont.)

7. What type of position do you hold? (select all that apply)	Count
Tenured/tenure track faculty (assistant professor)	67
Tenured/tenure track faculty (associate professor)	38
Tenured/tenure track faculty (full professor)	73
Research faculty (not tenure track; assistant level)	3
Research faculty (not tenure track; associate level)	1
Research faculty (not tenure track; full level)	2
Clinical or teaching faculty (not tenure track; assistant level)	4
Clinical or teaching faculty (not tenure track; associate level)	3
Clinical or teaching faculty (not tenure track; full level)	0
Adjunct faculty	2
Emeritus faculty	4
Retired	0
Postdoctoral researcher	33
Graduate student (MS level)	2
Graduate student (PhD level)	50
Administrator (e.g., chair, center director, dean, provost, etc.)	16
Government agency or national laboratory	7
Industry or consulting	3
Nonprofit or nongovernmental organization	1
Prefer not to say	3
Prefer to self-describe	2

AEESP participation

8. Do you serve on any AEESP committees?	Count
Yes	41
Not now, but I have in the past	43
No	191
Prefer not to say	8

9. Have you held any leadership positions in AEESP? (select all that apply)	Count
Yes, I have served on the Board of Directors	20
Yes, I have chaired an AEESP committee	29
No	238
Prefer not to say	7

Personal demographics

Personal Demographics

10. Which of the following most accurately describes your gender? (select all that apply)	Count
Cisgender	35
Female	130
Intersex	1
Male	128
Non-binary	3
Transgender	1
Prefer not to say	12
Prefer to self-describe	1

11. Which of the following most accurately describes your race and ethnicity? (select all that apply)	Count
African American/Black	18
Asian American/Asian	76
Hispanic/Latino/a	18
International (not based in the United States)	17
Middle Eastern/North African	10
Native American/Alaskan Native	2
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0
White	132
Prefer not to say	21
Prefer to self-describe	2

12. Do you have a disability?	Count
Yes	15
No	245
Prefer not to say	16

13. Which of the following most accurately describes your sexual orientation?	Count
Asexual	13
Bisexual	12
Gay	2
Heterosexual or straight	207
Lesbian	1
Pansexual	1
Queer	3
Questioning	0
Prefer not to say	42
Prefer to self-describe	2

Did You Know?

Nominations for 2027 AEESP Awards and Fellows are now open. The [deadline to submit nominations for Awards](#) is **11:59 pm ET (U.S.) on Sunday, January 17, 2027**. The [deadline to submit nominations for Fellows](#) is **11:59 pm ET (U.S.) on Sunday, February 28, 2027**. 2027 AEESP Award recipients and 2026 & 2027 Fellow Recipients will be recognized in-person during the 2027 AEESP Research and Education Conference at UT-Austin May 18-20, 2027.

EES and AEESP: Building a Stronger Environmental Engineering and Science Community

Environmental Engineering Science (EES) | October 2026



Connections between AEESP and its official journal, Environmental Engineering and Science (EES), across the years. Left: Heileen Hsu-Kim and Grace E. Schwartz with former EES Editor-in-Chief Catherine Peters at the 2019 AEESP Conference. Right: current and past AEESP presidents José Cerrato, Kara Nelson, and Lee Blaney with Courtney M. Gardner, Lane Maguire, and former EES Editor-in-Chief Catherine Peters at the 2025 AEESP Conference.

Environmental Engineering Science (EES) is the official journal of the Association of Environmental Engineering and Science Professors (AEESP). Our joint vision is to strengthen EES as a trusted home for rigorous research and a place where the environmental engineering and science community can discover emerging ideas, recognize contributions, and connect across disciplines and career stages.

The EES editorial team, led by Editor-in-Chief Dr. Ramana Gadhamshetty and Senior Editors including Drs. Susan Masten, Baolin Deng, and Samendra Sherchan, is working with AEESP leadership to put that vision into practice. We see a shared opportunity to connect the journal more closely to AEESP's members, programs, and priorities, strengthening it as a home for rigorous research, scholarship in education and pedagogy, and community exchange. This includes broadening editorial participation, raising the visibility of research, recognizing community contributions, and supporting scholars at every career stage. One goal is to work with AEESP through periodic meetings to identify needs and launch mutually beneficial initiatives. The new EES LinkedIn page is an early platform for that work; future efforts can link journal activities with AEESP committees, conferences, member communications, and professional development. We are now welcoming 11 new Associate Editors to EES and will soon introduce the expanded team and its emerging initiatives.

A shared agenda for EES and AEESP

Strengthen the team

Broaden editorial expertise and invite AEESP members to contribute as editors, board members, and reviewers.

Share research and people

Use LinkedIn and other AEESP channels to spotlight EES papers, emerging investigators, and editorial contributors.

Build initiatives together

Develop practical collaborations through regular conversations, conference connections, publishing support, and recognition.

Welcoming 11 new Associate Editors

The new appointments build on the work of continuing Associate Editors Appala Raju Badireddy and Indranil Chowdhury. Together, the expanded team adds expertise across water and wastewater treatment, environmental microbiology, contaminant chemistry, ecological engineering, resource recovery, sustainability, and related fields.

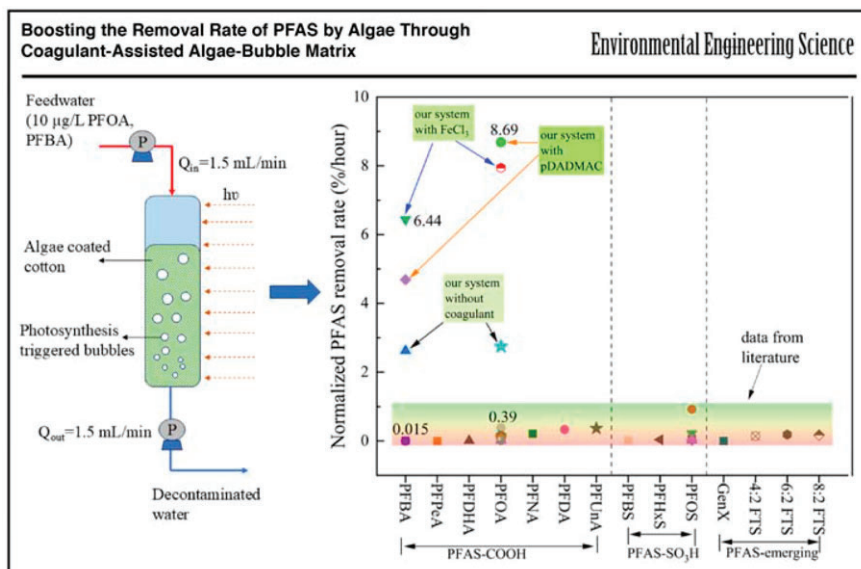
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EES & AEEESP (cont.)

	Courtney Gardner University of Texas at Austin Environmental microbiomes, ecological restoration, and precision bioremediation.		Vikram Kapoor University of Texas at San Antonio Environmental microbiology, water quality, wastewater epidemiology, and microbial source tracking.
	Thinesh Selvaratnam Lamar University Microalgal biotechnology, nature-based solutions, wastewater treatment, resource recovery, and remediation.		Heidi Gough University of Washington Wastewater treatment, environmental microbiology, soil remediation, and molecular ecology.
	Kaoru Ikuma Iowa State University Environmental biofilms and microbiology.		Jaewook Myung KAIST Environmental biotechnology, waste-to-resource conversion, biodegradable plastics, and sustainable materials.
	S. Vivek GMR Institute of Technology Ecological engineering, groundwater modeling, and machine learning.		Erica McKenzie Temple University Environmental chemistry, contaminant fate and transport, and natural and engineered remediation.
	Niveen Ismail Smith College Natural and ecological processes for removing chemical and microbial contaminants and improving water quality.		John Sivey Towson University Environmental organic chemistry, drinking water chemistry, and contaminant fate.
	Annick Anctil Michigan State University Sustainability, life-cycle assessment, and solar energy.		

Making EES research easier to find

The LinkedIn page gives EES a direct way to share recently published work, introduce the people behind the journal, and bring research to readers beyond the journal's existing audience. Recent posts have highlighted published papers, including research by Dr. Baolin Deng and his team. We plan to continue featuring research published by AEEESP members and to connect those spotlights with the EES Emerging Investigators Series, which features early-career researchers and new directions in the field.



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EES & AEESP (cont.)**Working more closely with AEESP**

The next step is to turn the journal–society connection into a planned, two-way program. Periodic check-ins with AEESP leadership and relevant committees can help identify priorities, coordinate communication, and move a small number of useful initiatives forward each year. Conference themes and AEESP member expertise can also help shape EES collections and special issues, with interested session organizers invited to develop ideas with the journal.

Initiatives under discussion

- **Publishing and professional development.** Explore a workshop or community practice with AEESP's Publication Committee on publishing, peer review, and building a sustainable scholarly career; consider a future-faculty seminar and features that support early-career faculty, graduate students, and postdocs, including scholars from underserved communities.
- **Community participation and recognition.** Invite AEESP members to express interest in Associate Editor and Editorial Board roles; coordinate the next MAL Publication Award cycle; and strengthen reviewer engagement through annual acknowledgment and possible Best Reviewer recognition.

- **Member access and communication.** Work with AEESP and the publisher to assess whether an annual subscription or waiver could be included with membership; meanwhile, explain the existing discounted rate and back-issue access. Use the AEESP ListServ alongside LinkedIn to share editorial opportunities, calls for papers, and journal updates.
- **Research visibility and special issues.** Build on LinkedIn paper highlights and the Emerging Investigators Series, and work with AEESP conference organizers to develop timely EES collections when there is clear community interest.

Join the conversation

We invite AEESP members to follow the [Environmental Engineering Science LinkedIn page](#), engage with and share its posts, and recommend papers and researchers for future features. Members interested in editorial service, publishing activities, or a possible special issue can contact the EES editorial office. As EES enters its fifth decade, we look forward to working with AEESP to make the journal an active platform for the research and people advancing environmental engineering and science.

Yang Deng Named 2026 WEF Fellow and Recipient of Fair Distinguished Engineering Educator Medal

Yang Deng, Professor of Environmental Engineering and Director of the Montclair Water Center at Montclair State University, has received two honors from the Water Environment Federation (WEF).

Dr. Deng was elected to the 2026 Class of WEF Fellows in recognition of his professional achievement, stature, and contributions to the water environment profession through research, education, and service. He was also selected to receive the 2026 Fair Distinguished Engineering Educator Medal, which recognizes outstanding accomplishments in environmental engineering education, including contributions to research and the education and development of future engineers. The medal honors Gordon Maskew Fair, a legendary professor of sanitary engineering at Harvard University.

Dr. Deng's research focuses on advanced water treatment technologies, emerging contaminants, and water infrastructure resilience, and he has authored more than 180 peer-reviewed publications. His previous honors include the WEF 2023 Camp Applied Research Award, the 2022 Project Innovation Award (Gold Winner) from the International Water Association (IWA), the 2019 Superior Achievement Award from the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists (AAEES), and the 2018 Frontier Research Award from the Chinese-American Professors in Environmental Engineering and Science (CAPEES). In 2024, he was inducted into AAEES as a Board-Certified Environmental Engineer (BCEE) by Eminence.



Dr. Yiming Liu Joins South Dakota State University



Dr. Yiming Liu joined the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at South Dakota State University as an Assistant Professor in August 2026. Prior to joining SDSU, Dr. Liu was a Rice Academy Postdoctoral Fellow in Civil and Environmental Engineering at Rice University. He received a Ph.D. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and a B.S. in Environmental Engineering from Tsinghua University. During his doctoral and postdoctoral training, Dr. Liu received multiple awards and fellowships recognizing his research contributions in environmental engineering.

Dr. Liu's research focuses on developing next-generation membrane and electrochemical technologies for sustainable water treatment and resource recovery, with a particular emphasis on understanding and engineering the materials–water interface. Current research in the Liu Lab includes critical mineral recovery, water reuse and desalination, electrodialysis and electrochemical separations, membrane materials, and environmental functional materials. By integrating advanced materials synthesis, interfacial characterization, and process engineering, the group seeks to develop innovative separation technologies that address global challenges in water, energy, and critical resource sustainability.

Dr. Hamidreza Sharifan Joins Florida Atlantic University



Dr. Hamidreza Sharifan joined the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry and the School of Environmental, Coastal, and Ocean Sustainability (ECOS) at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) as Assistant Professor of Environmental Chemistry in Fall 2026. He was previously a faculty member at the University of Texas at El Paso. His research centered on bioremediation, water quality and the environmental fate of contaminants. His current work includes a USDA-NIFA-funded project on the fate of PFAS and nanoparticles in agroecosystems. He serves as associate editor for the journal of Nanotechnology for Environmental Engineering (Springer) and serves on the Early Career Editorial Boards of

the Journal of Water Process Engineering (Elsevier), and Journal of Chemical Engineering (Elsevier).

Dr. Meiqi Yang Joins the University of British Columbia



Dr. Meiqi Yang joined the Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering at the University of British Columbia in July 2026 as an Assistant Professor. Prior to joining UBC, she was a Postdoctoral Associate at Rice University. Yang received her Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Princeton University in 2025, following an M.S. in Environmental Engineering from Yale University.

At UBC, Yang's research focuses on the recovery of critical minerals and metals from brines and other complex waste streams by integrating experimental and data-driven approaches. Her group develops advanced materials and sustainable extraction and separation processes while building simulation environments to better understand and optimize resource-recovery systems. A major focus of her research is integrating artificial intelligence with environmental engineering to accelerate materials discovery, uncover separation mechanisms, and optimize treatment and recovery processes. Her broader goal is to bridge AI, materials science, and process engineering to develop scalable, selective, and sustainable technologies for resource recovery.

Dr. Charles Burgis Joins Villanova University



Dr. Charles Burgis joined the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Villanova University as an Assistant Professor in August 2026. He is also a member of the Villanova Center for Resilient Water Systems (VCRWS). Prior to joining Villanova, Dr. Burgis was a program officer at the National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine, following post-doctoral training at University of Maryland, and receipt of his Ph.D. from University of Virginia and B.S. from Bates College. His research focuses on watershed management resilience, green stormwater infrastructure design and performance, and contaminant fate and transport in surface and groundwater. Dr. Bur-

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gis looks forward to continuing interdisciplinary research and collaboration to advance resilient water systems at the intersection of the built and natural environment.

Dr. Aaron Leininger Joins Tulane University



Dr. Aaron Leininger joined the Department of River-Coastal Science and Engineering at Tulane University in August 2026 as an assistant professor. He joins the faculty following postdoctoral research at EPFL and Eawag. His research combines microbial physiology, ecology, and electrochemistry to understand and control microbial interactions in engineered water systems. Leininger received his PhD in Civil

and Environmental Engineering from Princeton University in 2024 and his MS from the University of Maryland, College Park, where he worked on technology piloting at DC Water's Blue Plains facility. At Tulane, he is also a fellow of the ByWater Institute, where he works with undergraduate students on biogeochemical processes in the Mississippi River Delta.

Dr. Ramesh Goel Joins Oklahoma State University



Dr. Ramesh (Ram) Goel has joined Oklahoma State University (OSU) Engineering as the John Hendrix Engineering Chair Professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Goel joins OSU from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, where he served for 21 years as a researcher, educator, mentor, and academic leader in various roles. Prior to joining the University of Utah, Goel was a postdoctoral

research fellow at the University of Wisconsin–Madison from 2003 to 2005, following the completion of his doctoral degree at the University of South Carolina in 2003. Goel's multidisci-

plinary research integrates **environmental microbiology, sustainable process engineering, and ecosystem resilience** to address major challenges related to water scarcity, climate change-induced harmful algal blooms, nitrogen cycling, microbiomes, emerging pollutants, and environmental health. His research has been published in leading journals, including *Nature Communications*, *Environmental Science & Technology*, *Water Research*, and *Biore-source Technology*. Goel is a recipient of the National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER Award, NSF Rule of Life Award, Association of Environmental Engineering and Science Professors (AEESP) Distinguished Service Award, and American Society for Microbiology (ASM) Visiting Professorship to India, in addition to several departmental and college-level awards. Throughout his career, Goel has mentored the next generation of environmental engineering researchers and professionals. He has advised 24 PhD students, 23 master's students, and six postdoctoral researchers, several of whom now hold academic and leadership positions at institutions and in consulting around the world.

Dr. Nelson da Luz Joins Manhattan University



Dr. Nelson da Luz joined the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Manhattan University as an Assistant Professor in Fall 2026. Before this, he was a Research Assistant Professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he also earned his PhD and completed postdoctoral training. He is excited to return to Manhattan, where he previously earned his civil engineering bachelor's and environmental en-

gineering master's degrees. In the classroom, he strives to create learning environments where students engage with engineering concepts by analyzing real data, grappling with uncertainty, and developing judgment alongside technical skill. His research program applies modeling, simulation, and data science tools to centralized and decentralized water and wastewater systems, with a strong emphasis on student mentorship.

AEESP Membership

Membership in AEESP offers important benefits to educators, researchers, students, professionals, corporations and organizations engaged in the environmental engineering and science profession. All who are eligible for membership are welcome to join the Association and to participate in the full range of benefits and opportunities. Membership categories and fees are described below, with complete definitions provided in the AEESP Bylaws. Applying online is easy! We welcome your participation!

Regular and Student Membership

Regular Membership in AEESP is open to persons of full-time faculty or instructional rank (instructors, lecturers, assistant, associate, full professors) in environmental engineering or environmental science at academic institutions that offer baccalaureate, diploma, or graduate degrees in environmental engineering, environmental science or related fields.

Rank	Annual Fee
Full Professors	\$130
Associate Professors	\$100
Assistant Professors	\$65
Affiliate Members	\$75
Students and Post-docs	\$20

Members residing in low- and middle-income countries as identified by the World Bank may request a discount by contacting the Business Office.

Applying for regular membership is made by submitting a completed application form and a brief, two-page curriculum vitae online with payment. Alternatively, application materials may be mailed to the Business Office with a check enclosed.

Affiliate Membership

Affiliate Membership is open to individuals who are not eligible for regular membership including:

- Individuals primarily employed outside academia who also hold academic appointments in an environmental engineering or related academic program (e.g. adjunct faculty).
- Individuals primarily employed outside academia who have made contributions to education in environmental engineering or related fields.
- Educators in environmental engineering or related fields who are employed at junior colleges or other educational institutions that do not offer the degrees specified above.
- Individuals who were members at one time and who have retired from active teaching.

Application for affiliate membership is the same as for regular membership. The annual dues for affiliate members are \$75.

Sustaining Membership

Sustaining Membership is open to individuals and organizations whose concern for education in environmental engineering and related fields stimulates them to assist in strengthening university programs devoted to this area. Sustaining members are often those who employ or interact closely with graduates of environmental engineering and science programs such as consultants, utilities, research foundations, professional organizations, publishers and equipment manufacturers. The financial support provided by Sustaining Members allows AEESP to carry out a variety of special programs that benefit all members of the profession. Sustaining Members have access to all AEESP publications and are invited to all AEESP events. Organizations or individuals desiring more information on Sustaining Membership should write to the Secretary, the President, or the Business Office.

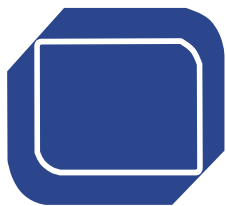
Annual dues for Sustaining Members are \$500. Organizations or individuals desiring more information on Sustaining Membership should write the Secretary, President, or Business Office.

Ready to join? You can apply for membership online!

<https://aeesp.org/membership>

More information can also be obtained from the AEESP Business Office:

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