



Oregon NASA Space Grant Consortium

2026

**Dr. Nancy Squires Memorial Academic
Achievement Awards**

**Open to students attending OSGC Community College and
4-Year Member Institutions**

Program Guide

**Release Date: April 6, 2026
Application Deadline: May 11 , 2026**



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Dr. Nancy Squires was a senior instructor in the School of Mechanical, Industrial, and Manufacturing Engineering at Oregon State University (OSU) where she taught for 15 years. She also taught courses in the OSU Honors College. Prior to coming to OSU in 2004, Dr. Squires retired from a career as an engineer in the aerospace industry. Dr. Squires was instrumental in establishing the OSU chapter of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) student club as well as playing a vital role in developing the aerospace engineering minor at OSU. Dr. Squires passed away unexpectedly on June 19, 2020.

Dr. Squires had a passion for engineering and aerospace that ran deep, and that passion served to inspire, motivate, and pave the way for success for every student who crossed her path. Having experienced the struggles of being a woman in aerospace, Dr. Squires understood the challenges the industry faces. She was a champion of women and underrepresented students in engineering, her positive outlook lifting students up along the way. Dr. Squires had a gentle soul, full of calm and compassion and was a bright light to so many. She challenged students but always believed in them even when they doubted themselves. She worked side-by-side with students to determine a path forward to achieve their goals and help them be the best version of themselves, even in the face of adversity. Never short on time for her students, Dr. Squires gave endlessly to mentoring and coaching the student rocketry teams, working through their challenges and celebrating their successes along the way. She was their biggest motivator and their most loyal supporter.



Oregon Space Grant is grateful for Dr. Squires' many contributions to STEM education and honors her commitment to building the next generation of inspired and passionate aerospace engineers. She leaves behind a legacy that continues to live and grow and inspire. *Ad astra* Dr. Squires.

Truly more than an educator, to those in this community, she was a mentor, role model, advisor, and friend. She was a bright light in a world that sometimes feels very dark. Using these abilities, she tirelessly worked with each student to help them follow and grow their love for aerospace. Helping to nurture that spark, she brought out the determination, drive, and fortitude in each and every student. This profound impact on each of our lives led to the confidence to carry on and accomplish our goals. Not only that, but as a close confidant, Dr. Squires spent countless hours providing guidance to each project or team and mentoring all the students within them. And no matter the outcome of a project or competition, she was always able to find the positive. Many times, she provided us with the much-needed reassurance to learn from our failures, never losing faith in us or our abilities, ultimately teaching us to do the same for ourselves. It is these attributes and so many more that made Dr. Squires a truly amazing and special human being.

- Adam Ragle
Oregon State University Student, Mechanical Engineering
Former President of OSU AIAA

Dr. Nancy Squires Memorial Academic Achievement Award Program Guide

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE AWARD PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION TO OSGC

The Oregon NASA Space Grant Consortium (OSGC) is a member of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program (Space Grant) within the NASA Office of STEM Engagement (OSTEM). OSGC supports the Agency’s objectives of fostering and encouraging careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and STEM education to develop a skilled, high-performing, capable next-generation workforce. Access to experiential learning and research opportunities is crucial to enhancing a student’s academic experience and preparing them to meet the needs of NASA and the nation. OSGC programs serve students in STEM fields as well as those in non-STEM disciplines with strong connections to aerospace and space science.

Oregon Space Grant is dedicated to embedding and integrating authentic engagement opportunities across all programs and activities. OSGC programming provides meaningful educational experiences that support Oregon communities and contribute to the national STEM workforce. These efforts serve students across the state who are enrolled in STEM fields, including STEM education, at OSGC member institutions.

OSGC is pleased to offer eligible students at member colleges and universities the opportunity to apply for a one-year Dr. Nancy Squires Memorial Academic Achievement Award to support their academic study in STEM, STEM education, and related non-STEM fields with a strong connection to aerospace and space science. These merit-based awards recognize students’ academic achievement and potential while encouraging continued engagement in STEM career pathways. They also help build STEM identity and a sense of belonging while complementing the broader academic experience.

Applicants will be asked to demonstrate how their field of study aligns with the NASA Vision and the activities of the various Mission Directorates. See *Appendix A: Agency Information and Strategic Framework*.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

OSGC offers the following three Academic Achievement Award programs:

- Community College Awards
- Undergraduate Awards
- STEM Pre-Service Educator Awards (MAT or MEd students)

Awards will be made in the following six categories:

- STEM Education: Preparation to be a classroom teacher or an informal educator in a STEM field
- Life Science: The study of living organisms—including biology, anatomy, astrobiology, zoology, botany, microbiology, physiology, biochemistry, neuroscience, and other related areas
- Physical Science: The study of natural sciences dealing with non-living organisms—including physics, astronomy, chemistry, earth science, geology, space science, material science, etc.
- Mathematics
- Engineering and Technology
- Non-STEM field with a strong connection to aerospace or space science, (e.g., journalism, communication, psychology, business, etc.). Note, this category is for community college and undergraduate programs only.

Achievement Awards will be awarded to students enrolled at OSGC affiliate institutions in eligible fields of study. In addition to the traditional aerospace-related fields of engineering and mathematics, we encourage those from diverse fields of study to apply. “NASA is more than astronauts. We are scientists, engineers, IT specialists, human resources specialists, accountants, writers, technicians, and many other kinds of people working together to break barriers to achieve the seemingly impossible.” (Careers at NASA 2023) Go to <https://www.nasa.gov/careers> for information on careers at NASA.

We encourage students to contact OSGC if they have questions about whether their field of study is suitable.

This document provides students with information about eligibility, deadlines, and other aspects of the application process and should be read in its entirety.

AWARD FUNDS

For the 2026 awards, programs are funded at the following levels*:

- **Community College Academic Achievement Awards - \$1,500 awards**
- **Undergraduate Academic Achievement Awards - \$3,000 awards**
- **STEM Pre-Service Educator Academic Achievement Awards - \$5,000 awards**

Award descriptions and eligibility requirements vary by program. Please review all terms and conditions included in this program guide before applying.

Achievement Awards are a one-time award; students who have previously received the Dr. Nancy Squires Academic Achievement Award are not eligible to participate.

**OSGC's ability to make awards is contingent upon funding from NASA and the Office of STEM Engagement (OSTEM)*

DATES | DEADLINES

Important dates and deadlines for all 2026 Achievement Award program categories are as follows:

- **Application Deadline: Monday, May 11, 2026**
- Award Selections: Late May 2026
- Award Disbursement: A single award will be made in early June 2026

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be currently enrolled and in good academic standing at one of the following OSGC member institutions:

4-Year Colleges and Universities

- Eastern Oregon University (EOU)
- George Fox University (GFU)
- Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT)
- Oregon State University (OSU)
- Pacific University (PU)
- Portland State University (PSU)
- Southern Oregon University (SOU)
- University of Oregon (UO)
- University of Portland (UP)
- Western Oregon University (WOU)

Community Colleges

- Lane Community College (Lane)
- Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC)
- Portland Community College (PCC)
- Southwestern Oregon Community College (SOCC)

Visit the following webpage for your institution representative's contact information.
<http://spacegrant.oregonstate.edu/members-oregon-nasa-space-grant-consortium>.

SECTION 2: COMMUNITY COLLEGE AWARDS

This Achievement Award is designed to encourage community college students to explore programs in STEM and STEM education fields of study. Achievement Awards will be competitively awarded to students enrolled at OSGC affiliated community colleges. Students who are dual enrolled in a community college and a 4-year institution are eligible to apply as long as minimum enrollment eligibility is met.

Awards in the amount of \$1,500 per student will be offered during the 2026 award period. This is a non-renewable award, paid in one installment for the award period.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Awards are open to community college students who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Student is enrolled in a minimum of 6 credit hours per term at an **affiliated community college** during the 2025-2026 academic year.
- Student is enrolled in a STEM field, STEM education coursework, or a non-STEM field with a strong connection to aerospace or space science.
- Student maintains good academic standing.
- Student is a U.S. Citizen.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIAL

Student Essay

Submit an essay that includes the following: (1-3 pages, single spaced, 12 pt font)

1. What are your interests in STEM and what areas would you like to explore in your academic career?
2. Describe your current STEM identity and how this award will contribute to building that identity and sense of belonging in the STEM community. STEM identity has been defined as the way people make “the concept of fitting in within STEM fields, specifically, the way individuals make ‘meaning of science experiences and how society structures possible meanings’” (Carlone and Johnson 2007; Hughes et al. 2013, p. 1980).
3. Are there classes you have taken or are currently taking that will help you meet your career goals and if so, explain why you feel they will benefit you on your academic path.
4. How do your academic interests relate to the NASA vision and substantively align with one or more of the NASA Mission Directorates? See *Appendix A. Agency Information and Strategic Framework*. For more information on current NASA missions visit the following website: <https://www.nasa.gov/nasa-missions/>
5. If you are a non-STEM student, describe how your field of study and interests are significantly connected to aerospace or space science.
6. Include other information that you believe qualifies you for award consideration. This may include extracurricular activities, awards, volunteer opportunities, soft skills, challenges, personal journey, etc.

Letter of Recommendation

One letter of recommendation is required. The letter should specifically address your qualifications and merit for this Achievement Award. During the application process, you will be asked to provide your letter writer’s contact information. Upon submission of your application this individual will receive an email request for the letter and instructions on how it is to be submitted. The due date for the letter is **Friday, May 15, 2026**.

Academic Transcript

A PDF version of your academic transcript must be submitted with your online application. Transcripts must be organized by term. Unofficial transcripts from your college or university website are acceptable.

Student Profile Form

Applicants must complete an online [Student Profile Form](#) and a [NASA Gateway profile](#) for the application to be considered for funding. This information is used for reporting and longitudinal tracking purposes to evaluate the effectiveness of NASA’s Office of STEM Engagement higher education programs.

Online Application Website

Submit application material to the following website: <https://spacegrant.net/apps/ors5/>

SECTION 3: UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

This Achievement Award is intended to promote and retain student enrollment in STEM fields and STEM education programs. Achievement Awards will be competitively awarded to students enrolled at an OSGC affiliated 4-year institution for the 2026 award period.

Awards in the amount of \$3,000 per student will be offered during the 2025-26 academic year. This is a non-renewable award, paid in one installment for the award period.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Awards are open to undergraduate students who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Student is enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours per term at an **affiliated 4-year institution** during the 2025-26 academic year.
- Student is enrolled in a STEM field, STEM education coursework, or a non-STEM field with a strong connection to aerospace or space science.
- Student maintains good academic standing.
- Student is a U.S. Citizen.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIAL

Letter of Intent

Submit a letter of intent that includes the following: (1-3 pages, single spaced, 12 pt font)

1. Indicate your STEM career goals as they relate to NASA's vision and how they substantively align with one or more of the NASA Mission Directorates. See *Appendix A. Agency Information and Strategic Framework*. For more information on current NASA missions visit the following website: <https://www.nasa.gov/nasa-missions/>
2. How will this award contribute to your career goals and further development of your STEM identity? STEM identity has been defined as the way people make “the concept of fitting in within STEM fields, specifically, the way individuals make 'meaning of science experiences and how society structures possible meanings'” (Carlone and Johnson 2007; Hughes et al. 2013, p. 1980).
3. Describe how your career choice will benefit the STEM community at large.
4. Are there classes you have taken or are currently taking that will help you meet your career goals and if so, explain why you feel they will benefit you on your academic path.
5. If you are a non-STEM student, describe how your field of study and interests are significantly connected to aerospace or space science.
6. Include other information that you believe qualifies you for award consideration. This may include extracurricular activities, awards, volunteer opportunities, soft skills, challenges, personal journey, etc.

Student Resume

Include relevant employment, education, and extra-curricular activities. Resume should also provide current contact information including email, phone, and mailing address.

Letter of Recommendation

One letter of recommendation is required. The letter should specifically address your qualifications and merit for this Achievement Award. During the application process, you will be asked to provide your letter writer's contact information. Upon submission of your application this individual will receive an email request for the letter and instructions on how it is to be submitted. The due date for the letter is **Friday, May 15, 2026**.

Academic Transcript

A PDF version of your academic transcript must be submitted with your online application. Transcripts must be organized by term. Unofficial transcripts printed from your college or university website are acceptable.

Student Profile Form

Applicants must complete an online [Student Profile Form](#) and a [NASA Gateway profile](#) for the application to be considered for funding. This information is used for reporting and longitudinal tracking purposes to evaluate the effectiveness of NASA's Office of STEM Engagement higher education programs.

Online Application Website

Submit application material to the following website: <https://spacegrant.net/apps/ors6/>

SECTION 4: STEM PRE-SERVICE EDUCATOR AWARDS

This Achievement Award is intended to recognize those students who have completed an undergraduate degree and are currently enrolled in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program with a STEM education focus or a Master of Science in Education. Awards will be competitively awarded to students enrolled at an OSGC affiliated 4-year institution.

Awards in the amount of \$5,000 per student will be offered during the 2026 award period. This is a non-renewable award, paid in one installment for the award period.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

Awards are open to students enrolled in an MSED or MAT program who meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Student is enrolled in a minimum of 6 credit hours per term at an **affiliated 4-year institution** during the 2025-26 academic year.
- Student is enrolled in an MSED or MAT program with a STEM focus.
- Student maintains good academic standing.
- Student is a U.S. Citizen.

REQUIRED APPLICATION MATERIAL

Letter of Intent

Submit a letter of intent that includes the following: (1-3 pages, single spaced, 12 pt font)

1. What inspired you to become a teacher and where are you in your pre-service educator path?
2. Are you currently engaged in classroom student teaching, and if not, when do you plan to start?
3. How do you plan to incorporate NASA content into your student teaching plan? Describe how this award might prepare you to incorporate NASA content in the classroom.
4. Describe your vision as an educator to help build students' STEM identity. STEM identity has been defined as the way people make "the concept of fitting in within STEM fields, specifically, the way individuals make 'meaning of science experiences and how society structures possible meanings'" (Carlone and Johnson 2007; Hughes et al. 2013, p. 1980).
5. Indicate your STEM career goals as they relate to NASA's vision and how they substantively align with one or more of the NASA Mission Directorates. See *Appendix A. Agency Information and Strategic Framework*. For more information on current NASA missions visit the following website: <https://www.nasa.gov/nasa-missions/>
6. Include other information that you believe qualifies you for award consideration. This may include extracurricular activities, awards, volunteer opportunities, soft skills, challenges, personal journey, etc.

Student Resume

Include relevant employment, education, and extra-curricular activities. Resume should also provide current contact information including email, phone, and mailing address.

Letter of Recommendation

One letter of recommendation is required. The letter should specifically address your qualifications and merit for this achievement award. During the application process, you will be asked to provide your letter writer's contact information. Upon submission of your application this individual will receive an email request for the letter and instructions on how it is to be submitted. The due date for the letter is **Friday, May 15, 2026**.

Academic Transcript

A PDF version of your academic transcript must be submitted with your online application. Transcripts must be organized by term. Unofficial transcripts printed from your college or university website are acceptable.

Student Profile Form

Applicants must complete an online [Student Profile Form](#) and a [NASA Gateway profile](#) for the application to be considered for funding. This information is used for reporting and longitudinal tracking purposes to evaluate the effectiveness of NASA's Office of STEM Engagement higher education programs.

Online Application Website

Submit application material to the following website: <https://spacegrant.net/apps/ors7/>

SECTION 5: APPLICATION PROCEDURES FOR ALL PROGRAMS

Step 1: Complete all sections of the appropriate Online Application:

| | |
|--|---|
| OSGC Community College Awards: | https://spacegrant.net/apps/ors5/ |
| OSGC Undergraduate Awards: | https://spacegrant.net/apps/ors6/ |
| OSGC STEM Pre-Service Educator Awards: | https://spacegrant.net/apps/ors7/ |

Step 2: Complete both a [Student Profile Form](#) and a [NASA Gateway profile](#). These must be completed for the application to be considered for funding.

Step 3: Attach the required supporting documentation to the application (varies by program)

REVIEW | SELECTION PROCESS

Applications are evaluated for eligibility when received. Qualified applications will be reviewed by a selection committee who will make recommendations for funding based on stated review criteria (see below). OSGC encourages applicants from all member institutions.

Review Criteria

- Academic achievement
- STEM-related career goals
- Strength of Student Essay/Letter of Intent
- Direct relation to NASA vision and alignment with one or more NASA Mission Directorate
- Strength of Letter of Recommendation

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

If awarded, recipients agree to:

- Contact Financial Aid office upon receipt of award letter to verify eligibility of award funds.
- Notify OSGC of any changes in mailing address, e-mail address, or telephone number for purposes of follow-up reporting.
- Grant permission to release and/or publish requested recipient information to NASA or other appropriate parties for reporting purposes.
- If applicable, students submit a signed Media Release Form, granting OSGC permission to release information and utilize any submitted photos from posters and/or presentations for publications and/or social media.
- Include the following text in all publications resulting from funded work “...supported in part through funding from NASA and Oregon Space Grant Consortium, cooperative agreement 80NSSC25M7044.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Direct questions to Monty Johnson, OSGC Program Manager, monty.johnson@oregonstate.edu

Visit the Oregon Space Grant Consortium website: <http://spacegrant.oregonstate.edu>

OSGC Dr. Nancy Squires Memorial Academic Achievement Award Program: <https://spacegrant.oregonstate.edu/dr-nancy-squires-memorial-academic-achievement-award-program>

APPENDIX A: AGENCY INFORMATION AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

NASA's current topics and relevant missions are listed below. Students should use these priorities to guide them in the selection of a STARR research review topic.

Humans in Space

International Space Station (ISS) - Commercial Crew Program (CCP) - NASA Astronauts - Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Economy

Moon to Mars

Commercial Lunar Payload Series (CLPS) Initiative - Lunar Gateway - Artemis Mission - Space Launch System (SLS)

Earth

Air – Climate - Hazards - Water, Oceans, and Ice - Land

Space Tech

Space Travel - Living in Space - Manufacturing, Materials, and 3-D Printing - Robotics - Science Instruments - High-Tech Computing

Flight

Green Aviation - Future Aircraft - Supersonic Flight - Reducing Flight Delays - Unmanned Aircraft

Solar System and Beyond

Planets, Moons, and Dwarf Planets - The Search for Life and Exoplanets - The Sun - Stars and Galaxies - Black Holes - Dark Energy and Dark Matter

Current High-Profile NASA Missions

- Artemis Program
- Commercial Crew Program
- Curiosity Mars Rover
- Hubble Space Telescope
- InSight Mars Lander
- International Space Station
- James Webb Space Telescope
- Juno: Mission of Jupiter
- Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter
- Mars Perseverance Rover
- New Horizons: Pluto and Beyond
- OSIRIS-Rex Asteroid Mission
- Parker Solar Probe

NASA Vision

Exploring the secrets of the universe for the benefit of all.

NASA Mission

NASA explores the unknown in air and space, innovates for the benefit of humanity, and inspires the world through discovery.

NASA 2022 Strategic Plan

<https://www.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/fy-22-strategic-plan-1.pdf?emrc=ff1a1e>

2022 Strategic Plan Key Priorities

- **Strengthening STEM education through inspirational missions and collaboration with the academic community;**
- **Addressing the climate crisis through space-based observation equipment, international partnerships, and data-sharing; and**
- **Promoting rules and norms that govern space, create stability, and preserve and protect the space environment for the future**

NASA's vision and mission draw support from the organizational structure of the Mission Directorates, each with a specific responsibility.

NASA's Mission Directorates

- **Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD)**: transforms aviation with research to dramatically reduce the environmental impact of flight, and improves aircraft and operations efficiency while maintaining safety in increasingly crowded skies. ARMD also generates innovative aviation concepts, tools, and technologies for development and maturation by the aviation community.
<https://www.nasa.gov/aeroresearch>
- **Exploration Systems Development Mission Directorate (ESDMD)**: defines and manages systems development for programs critical to the NASA's Artemis program and planning for NASA's Moon to Mars exploration approach in an integrated manner. ESDMD manages the human exploration system development for lunar orbital, lunar surface, and Mars exploration. ESDMD leads the human aspects of the Artemis activities as well as the integration of science into the human system elements. ESDMD is responsible for development of the lunar and Mars architectures. Programs in the mission directorate include **Orion**, **Space Launch System**, **Exploration Ground Systems**, **Gateway**, **Human Landing System**, and **Extravehicular Activity (xEVA)** and **Human Surface Mobility**.
- **Science Mission Directorate (SMD)**: expands the frontiers of Earth science, heliophysics, planetary science, and astrophysics. Using robotic observatories, explorer craft, ground-based instruments, and a peer-reviewed portfolio of sponsored research, SMD seeks knowledge about our solar system, the farthest reaches of space and time, and our changing Earth. <http://science.nasa.gov/>
- **Space Operations Mission Directorate (SOMD)**: manages NASA's current and future space operations in and beyond low-Earth orbit (LEO), including commercial launch services to the International Space Station. SOMD operates and maintains exploration systems, develops and operates space transportation systems, and performs broad scientific research on orbit. In addition, SOMD is responsible for managing the space transportation services for NASA and NASA-sponsored payloads that require orbital launch, and the agency's space communications and navigation services supporting all NASA's space systems currently in orbit.
- **Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD)**: pursues transformational technologies that have high potential for offsetting future mission risk, reducing cost, and advancing existing capabilities. STMD uses merit-based competition to conduct research and technology development, demonstration, and infusion of these technologies into NASA's missions and American industry. This mission directorate is being refocused as a new Exploration Research & Technology (ER&T) organization to support exploration as a primary customer. <http://www.nasa.gov/directorates/spacetech/home/index.html>.
- **The Mission Support Directorate (MSD)**: enables the Agency's missions by managing institutional services and capabilities. MSD is actively reducing institutional risk to NASA's current and future missions by improving processes, stimulating efficiency, and providing consistency and uniformity across institutional standards and practices. <https://www.nasa.gov/msd>.

APPENDIX B: REFERENCES CITED

- Carlone, H.B. & Johnson, A. (2007). Understanding the science experiences of women of color: Science identity as an analytic lens. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 44 (8), 1187-1218.
- Hughes, R.M., Nzekwe, B., & Molyneaux, K.J. (2013). The Single Sex Debate for Girls in Science: A Comparison Between Two Informal Science Programs on Middle School Students' STEM Identity Formation. *Research in Science Education*, 43 (5), 1979-2007.