

Q1 Name

Matt Craig

Q2 Approximate number of years as a member of the [AAVSO](#)

6 years

Q3 In 100 words or less, explain why you want to serve on the AAVSO Board of Directors.

The AAVSO has been an extremely valuable resource for me as I've built an observational program at my university over the last several years. Serving on the Board would allow me to give back to the organization and help guide it through the next few years.

Q4 Briefly describe your past and current contributions to the organization.

My primary contributions to the organization have been a rewrite of the chart generator for the Variable Star Plotter (VSP) in Python and serving as chair for the Data Quality Task Force. I am continuing to work updating the code base for the organization.

Q5 In your opinion, what are the greatest strengths of the AAVSO?

I believe the AAVSO has four primary strengths:

- An unparalleled database of historical observations.
- Dedicated observers and volunteers who enable the AAVSO to achieve far more than it could with its staff alone.
- Outstanding staff who are genuinely dedicated to the mission of the AAVSO.
- Members and volunteers with extensive programming background who can contribute to unifying the code base on which the AAVSO relies.

Q6 If elected to the Board, how would you help the AAVSO translate those strengths into opportunities?

I have worked with students who have submitted data to the AAVSO and who have used data from the AAVSO. Some changes which would help build on this are: i) Using the data would be much more straightforward for astronomers with some relatively minor changes in documentation and explanatory materials; ii) In addition, providing current observers with more tools to assess the quality of their submissions and to improve their photometry as they gain experience will help ensure the quality of the data remains high.

While the role of the Board is to help guide the organization, I acknowledge that many members of the AAVSO have far more experience and knowledge about the organization than I do. An essential part of this role is listening to members.

I have extensive experience in open source software projects that could, I think, help marshal the skills and enthusiasm of talented volunteers already developing and maintaining core AAVSO tools into making those tools more unified and easier to maintain. I see my potential role not as a leader but as a coach and perhaps a bridge between the needs of the staff and the desires of volunteers.

Q7 In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges currently facing the AAVSO?

The two greatest challenges are the lack of diversity among AAVSO members and the relatively high barrier to entry for variable star observing beyond visual observing.

Q8 If elected to the Board, how would you help the AAVSO effectively meet those challenges?

I think the two challenges are related. While visual and some solar observations require little equipment, anything beyond that is expensive. Given the success of other citizen science initiatives, I think there is potential to expand ways to participate in curation of AAVSO data. If coupled with recognition of members for that kind of work, those opportunities have the potential to improve engagement.

Q9 Skills Background - Please check in the lower boxes every category that pertains to your background: X = experienced (X) = some experience

<p>Professional Astronomy – actively involved with AAVSO or Observing Campaigns</p> <p>X</p>	<p>Amateur Astronomy – actively involved with AAVSO</p>	<p>General Management Experience – includes organization management, HR, finances, project management</p> <p>(X)</p>	<p>Financial Management Experience – includes Profit/Loss responsibility, investment knowledge</p>	<p>Fundraising Experience – includes participating in and/or managing major fundraising efforts, or success in applying for grants and contracts (e.g. with NASA, NSF, others)</p> <p>(X)</p>
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Q10 What are the three most important skills/experiences that you would bring to Council?

I have extensive leadership experience on my campus, extensive experience in collaborative software projects and I'm willing to propose new ideas and admit when they are bad ideas!