

**Q1 Name**

Walt Cooney

**Q2 Approximate number of years as a member of the [AAVSO](#) - 20****Q3 In 100 words or less, explain why you want to serve on the AAVSO Board of Directors.**

I'd like to serve on the AAVSO Board of Directors because I so strongly support its mission. I've been an amateur astronomer since I was nine years old and have always loved contributing any way I could to the hobby and to the science. The AAVSO has been a wonderful avenue to make those contributions. It's very important to me that the AAVSO continues to succeed and to grow.

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

- Contributed 123,000 observations to the database, mostly CCD.
- Submitted about 60 variable stars to VSX that I had discovered serendipitously while doing observations.
- Have published several papers in JAAVSO
- One of the cofounders and owners of Sonoita Research Observatory which became the first AAVSONet observatory in 2005.
- Operate and maintain Madrona Peak Observatory (with three partners) and brought it in to the AAVSONet.
- Current Cataclysmic Variables Section co-lead
- Working with University of Texas astronomers to organize and coordinate AAVSO involvement for their HST work on AB Aur.

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

There are a lot of strengths of the AAVSO. The two that come across as possibly the greatest are the people who make up the AAVSO now and the legacy of what people in the AAVSO have done in the last 112 years. The people who are today's AAVSO members love amateur astronomy and want to contribute to it in a real way. Many of the members are professional astronomers or extremely experienced amateur astronomers who are driven to share with the rest of us and to build the AAVSO.

The legacy of more than a century's work by AAVSO members is the trove of observational data that has been so important to understanding the stars. There is much more that will be found in that legacy of work in the future too.

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

I'd like to continue to grow the size of the organization, facilitate lots of communication across the members, drive more pro-am collaboration, and support the continuing work of the visual observers.

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

We've got to keep the membership engaged and interested in the organization for the long term. Funding is also a challenge and always will be, even with the foundation of the endowment supporting the organization. Financial growth drives more opportunities for members and allows greater accomplishments down the road.

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

I've been very impressed with all the ways the AAVSO has driven involvement in the last several years. I'd like to encourage and support the webinars and find other ways to engage people and make the AAVSO more participative. I'd like to work with those on the board who have written grant proposals to help them work on proposals and I'd like to keep reaching out to professionals for pro-am collaboration opportunities. As they see us as a worthwhile contributor, they can help support us through their grants as well. In particular, I'd like to see if our follow-up work of the alerts and discoveries coming from the surveys and space telescopes can lead to financial assistance.

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

Professional Astronomy – actively involved with AAVSO or Observing Campaigns	Amateur Astronomy – actively involved with AAVSO	General Management Experience – includes organization management, HR, finances, project management	Financial Management Experience – includes Profit/Loss responsibility, investment knowledge	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)
x	x	x		

**Q10 What are the three most important skills/experiences that you would bring to Council?**

- Lifelong amateur astronomer with a passion for the hobby and for contribution to the science of astronomy.
- Established working relationships with a number of amateur and professional astronomers both inside and outside the AAVSO.
- For most of my career I led global teams of chemical engineers working to design new chemical plants and expand existing plants. Later in my career I took on the role of Department Leader for Dow Chemical's Central Process Engineering and Process Automation Department. I would like to bring those leadership and team skills to the AAVSO to help us build further the great work has been doing for many years.