



Association of Universities for Research in Astronomy

Dear AURA Colleague,

I am writing to let you know that on February 1, 2015, I plan to step down as AURA President. At that point I will have completed three full terms as President beginning in 2000. There is no doubt that this has been an extraordinary period of professional challenges and accomplishments for me and an important phase in the evolution of AURA. AURA is a stronger and more robust organization today thanks to the great talent and commitment of our employees. It has been a great pleasure and source of pride for me to have been associated with you and this prestigious organization.

It is important to convey the reason that I have made the decision not to seek an additional term. This is based on my conviction that any organization, in order to remain vibrant and open to new ideas, must have a way of renewing its leadership on a periodic basis. While I will continue to be vitally interested and committed to AURA's success, the long term interests of AURA will be best served by sharing the opportunity to lead and paving the way for the future.

Over the past fifteen years, I have been continuously impressed by the dedication and culture of excellence within the AURA staff. This has not only enabled me to be successful, it has been a pillar for the entire astronomical community. The willingness of its many members to give their time and efforts to serve on our governance committees is a powerful endorsement of AURA's value. AURA has led the way in ground-based O/IR and solar astronomy, and expanding the frontiers of space astronomy. I am proud to have been a part of this.

Over the coming months, the AURA Board will begin the search process. As a part of this, your views will be solicited and I hope you will take the time to provide input. There is no question in my mind that a great many highly qualified individuals will seek this position. Leading AURA has been a privilege for me and it will be for my successor.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William S. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President

December 11, 2013