



Arecibo Science Advocacy Partnership (ASAP) March 2022 Newsletter

The ASAP Board and members express their solidarity with the citizens of Ukraine, its astronomy and radio science communities and especially with our colleagues of the Institute of Radio Astronomy and Kharkiv Institute of the Ionosphere.

U.S. Senate unanimously passes resolution in support of Arecibo Observatory

On February 10, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a bipartisan resolution recognizing the unique contributions and unmatched importance of the Arecibo Observatory to science and education. The resolution, which was first drafted by members of the ASAP Advocacy and Outreach committee, also "encourages the NSF... in consultation with other agencies to study means of replacing the scientific capabilities that were lost at the Arecibo Observatory, utilizing new state-of-the-art technologies at the site." You can find the full text of the resolution [here](#).

In a [press release](#), the co-sponsors of the Senate bill reiterated the importance that the observatory has had to Puerto Rico, the U.S., and the world, and expressed their support in searching for ways to replace the 305-m Arecibo telescope. Sen. Rick Scott indicated that the "collapse of the Arecibo Observatory telescope left a significant void for the scientific community in Puerto Rico, our nation, and across the world, especially for the thousands of students it inspired." Sen. Richard Blumenthal said that this "significant step expresses the strong support of the Senate for further studies for how to replace, and expand upon, this telescope's capabilities to benefit education and science at the world-class Arecibo Observatory." Sen. Ed Makey said that this resolution "will encourage the National Science Foundation to identify the best next steps in replacing the Arecibo Observatory telescope, which served as a beacon for innovation and discovery and a cultural symbol in Puerto Rico for decades." Sen. Bob Menendez added that "we will continue to push for rebuilding the observatory and further investing in scientific innovation in Puerto Rico."

An earlier version of this resolution was drafted by ASAP Advocacy and Outreach Committee members in November 2021, as a part of the efforts by ASAP to commemorate the one-year collapse of the 305-meter telescope. ASAP members then gave the resolution to the office of Rep. Jennifer González-Colón from Puerto Rico, who made minor changes to ASAP's draft, and to the office of Connecticut Senator Richard Blumenthal. On December 1st, 2021 (a year after the collapse

of the 305-meter telescope) [Rep. Jennifer González Colón \(R-PR\) introduced the resolution in the House of Representatives](#), which was co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of representatives composed of Steven Palazzo (R-MS-4), Michael Waltz (R-FL-06), Stephanie Murphy (D-FL-7), Brian Babin (R-TX-36), María Elvira Salazar (R-FL-27), and Darren Soto (D-FL-09). The next day, on December 2nd, [Sen. Blumenthal \(D-CT\) introduced a similar version in the Senate](#), which was co-sponsored by Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Rick Scott (R-FL), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), and Chris Murphy (D-CT). In late January 2022, the House resolution [was added as an amendment](#) to the [America COMPETES Act](#), which passed the House on February 4, 2022 [by a vote of 222 to 210](#).

This was a group effort by the ASAP Advocacy and Outreach Committee, but special acknowledgement should be given to Robert Frampton for providing the idea for the resolution and its first draft, and Sam Myers, whose communication with Rep. González-Colón's office was instrumental to this resolution being introduced in Congress.

Looking forward, the ASAP Advocacy and Outreach Committee hopes to build on the momentum behind this Congressional support by engaging Congress on the potential allocation of funds for a future Arecibo Observatory. In particular, members of the Advocacy and Outreach Committee feel that a future Arecibo Observatory can play a critical role in achieving the goals of the House of Representative's COMPETES act and the Senate's [US Innovation and Competition](#) act. If you'd like to learn more or get involved with these efforts, please contact us at secretary@areciboscience.org and indicate your interest.

Please join us at the 240th meeting of the American Astronomical Society!

There will be a variety of Arecibo Observatory and ASAP-organized and supported events at the AAS 240 meeting! This meeting will be a hybrid event with the in-person component in Pasadena on June 12 - 16. **Héctor Arce will be giving an Arecibo Observatory focused plenary talk on Monday, June 13 at 3:40pm!** Please also stay tuned for more information on an **Arecibo Observatory Splinter meeting** during this week (date and time to be determined in late March). This splinter meeting will involve a series of talks and a panel discussion that will focus on the unparalleled impact of Arecibo's education and outreach programs, and its role in launching the careers of thousands of scientists worldwide. You can find a longer description of this meeting [here](#). There will be opportunities to present and all are welcome to attend!

ASAP organized a commemoration event for the Anniversary of the day of the collapse, Dec 1

Last December 1st, ASAP held an event to remember the good memories from Arecibo. That date, one year ago, marked a drastic change in the professional or personal lives of many of us. However, ASAP wanted to remember that there are still possibilities and that Arecibo is more than an instrument. We wanted to remark that Arecibo is a beacon of inspiration.

Hector Arce, chair of ASAP, opened the event announcing that a Senate resolution was submitted that day to recognize the contributions of the Arecibo Observatory and to study means of replacing its scientific capabilities (see first article on this newsletter edition). Then, Michael Nolan read the [Board ASAP statement on Arecibo's future](#) in response to the National Academies Decadal Survey on Astronomy and Astrophysics.

The announcements were followed by [a talk about Arecibo's history by Don Campbell](#). He reminded us that there were no precedents when the Arecibo Observatory was created, but good ideas and qualified people (many from Puerto Rico) made this engineering marvel possible. Don also reminded us that the Arecibo evolved. It started when scientists were curious about the ionosphere. Then, astronomers joined them, and then planetary scientists, and if time had allowed it, many other areas would have been welcomed. Arecibo is the place in the middle of the green Caribbean mountains where scientists were inspired to answer the most profound questions about life and physics on our planet and beyond. Carl Sagan and Frank Drake used Arecibo to send a message out of the galaxy and to inspire minds in Puerto Rico and around the world.

At the end of the talk, a series of videos were broadcasted. ASAP had invited some friends to talk about “What Arecibo meant to me/Qué significa Arecibo para mi?” The response was overwhelming, we received more than 60 videos in two days, and they are still arriving. ASAP thanks to all the participants. It is inspiring to see how Arecibo impacted the lives of scientists, staff, former students, interns, visitors, kids of Arecibo staff, among others. You can check them out at our [Youtube channel](#). You can still send us your video if you have not made one. See easy instructions [here](#) how to do so.

Lunchtime Talks continue

ASAP's popular lunchtime talk series resumed on March 3rd with a presentation by the NAIC Astronomy Head Anish Rishi, who will discuss the current status of NAIC initiatives including the New Generation Arecibo Telescope and the refurbished 12-meter radio telescope.

Ray Lugo retirement

Ray Lugo has stepped down as head of the Florida Space Institute (FSI) at the University of Central Florida (UCF). In this capacity, he was the program manager of the Arecibo Observatory cooperative agreement with the NSF. UCF has advertised the position at <https://jobs.ucf.edu/en-us/job/501671/faculty-administrator-and-director-florida-space-institute> and is in the process of finding a replacement. Dr. Julie Brisset has stepped in as Interim Director of the FSI.

ASAP Social Media Updates

ASAP has opened Facebook and Twitter accounts for advertising relevant events and advocating for the Arecibo Observatory through social media.

Check out our Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/AreciboASAP>

And our Twitter page at <https://twitter.com/AreciboAsap>

Follow us or share your news with the hashtags #ELOBSERVATORIORENACE and/or #ARECIBOREBORN.

The Arecibo REU program returns this summer!

The NSF has awarded funding for the Arecibo REU program for a three-year period from April 2022 to March 2025 (estimated). The application period for this year's 10-week summer program closes on April 10th. If you know an undergraduate student seeking research experience opportunities, please encourage them to apply. Due to the NSF grant rules, only U.S. citizens and permanent residents can apply. For more information and to apply, see <http://www.naic.edu/REUT/index.html>.

Please Join ASAP Efforts to Advocate for the Arecibo Observatory!

Please join one of ASAP's working committees and/or consider standing for election to the ASAP Board this summer. Take your choice between the Advocacy/Outreach Committee, the AO 2.0 Committee, the Puerto Rico Liaison Committee, and the Admin/Infrastructure Committee. Kindly just email to secretary@areciboscience.org and indicate your interest.

Current ASAP Structure

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