

## THE 2020 GOLDSCHMIDT® CONFERENCE

The 30<sup>th</sup> Goldschmidt Conference was unlike any that came before. When planning began more than 18 months ago, the meeting was scheduled to take place in Honolulu (Hawaii, USA). Then the pandemic struck and nearly all travel came to a halt. As it became clear that an in-person meeting would not be possible, the Geochemical Society and the European Association of Geochemistry considered the two remaining possibilities: cancel the meeting or hold a virtual event.

Although there was no blueprint for a virtual conference, the societies determined that it was important to provide a forum for scientific discussion and collaboration in this difficult time. What followed was a rapid reinvention of the conference to an online environment. As always, the meeting reflected the cooperation of the entire geochemical community. Hundreds of scientists contributed to the success of the conference by volunteering as theme and session chairs, grant application reviewers, mentors, and student helpers.

The Local Organizing Committee (LOC), chaired by Ken Rubin (University of Hawai'i, USA), had planned a wonderful array of field trips, workshops, and social events, some of which were converted into a virtual format. The LOC also included Michael Garcia, Mariko Hatta, Colin Ferguson, Jasper Konter, and Gregory Ravizza (all of the University of Hawai'i, USA) and Harue Masuda (Osaka City University, Japan).

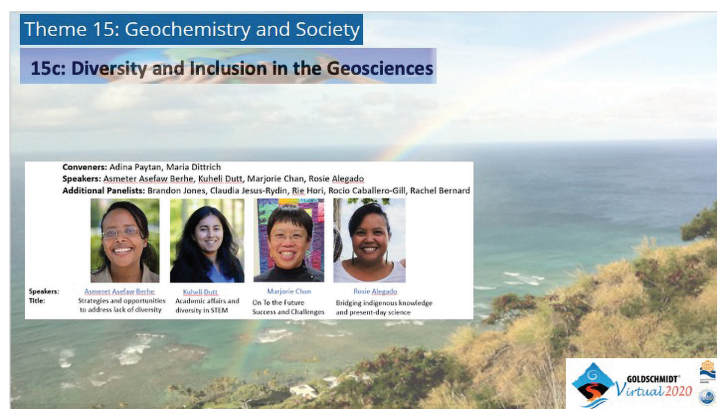
The Science Committee was chaired by Sumit Chakraborty (Ruhr Universität Bochum, Germany) and Adina Paytan (University of California at Santa Cruz, USA) and also included Vickie Bennett (Australian National University), Maria Dittrich (University of Toronto, Canada), Barbara Dutrow (Louisiana State University, USA), Gabriel Filippelli (Indiana University, USA), Richard Pancost (University of Bristol, UK), Ken Rubin, Sara Russell (Natural History Museum, UK), and Liping Zhou (Peking University, China).

More than 3,000 scientists from 63 countries participated. Students made up 44% of the conference, up from 31% two years ago. Registration fees were lowered by more than 80% for professionals and 90% for students, compared to fees for the in-person meeting. Authors were invited to upload presentations in advance, and everyone had access to them a week before the meeting officially started. Each session then had a one-hour discussion session for questions and answers. With physical space in meeting rooms not an issue, the distinction between posters and talks was no longer necessary, so each person who submitted an abstract could submit either a static presentation or a video.



One major challenge was scheduling sessions to accommodate delegates in nearly every time zone in the world. The day was stretched out to 12 hours, and some sessions, such as the plenary lectures, were presented twice to give everyone a chance to participate at a convenient time. Inevitably, some people had to participate in the overnight hours. One upside, however, was making the conference more accessible to people who could not have otherwise attended in person. The plenaries are now available for everyone to watch on YouTube: see [www.youtube.com/user/goldschmidtconf](http://www.youtube.com/user/goldschmidtconf).

A highlight of the conference was the new Theme 15: Geochemistry and Society – Focused Sessions and Debates. These daily programs addressed geochemistry and geohazards; the future of land and sea in the face of climate change; diversity and inclusion in the geosciences; the origin of life on Earth and beyond; and communicating science in the age of social media. These discussions are now also freely available on the conference's YouTube channel.



Topics in Theme 15 included a discussion of diversity and inclusion in the geosciences.

### Media Coverage

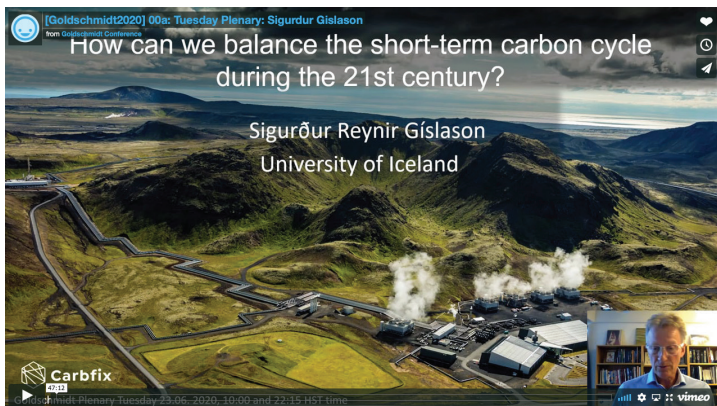
The incredible science presented during the Goldschmidt Conference has implications that stretch far beyond the meeting itself. Press officer Tom Parkhill and the media team distributed six press releases throughout the week to promote the conference and geochemistry to a wide audience. The releases generated significant media attention, with articles and interviews appearing in publications around the world. Some of this coverage can be found at: [www.geochemsoc.org/events/goldschmidtconference/goldschmidt-news](http://www.geochemsoc.org/events/goldschmidtconference/goldschmidt-news).

### Sponsors

A successful Goldschmidt Conference would not be possible without the support of generous sponsors. The GS and LOC wish to thank the Geochemical Society of Japan, Thermo Fisher Scientific, CAMECA, and Bruker Nano Analytics for their support of the conference this year. The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation also provided support for Theme 15.

### Thank You

Organizing a new type of conference in a fraction of the normal planning time was a great challenge. The societies thank everyone who participated in the virtual Goldschmidt for your patience and encouragement. One constant, even in this unprecedented year, was the very high quality of the science shared throughout the week. We are grateful to everyone who helped turn this challenge into an opportunity for cooperation and to advance our discipline.



EAG President Sigurður Reynir Gíslason presented one of the plenary lectures from his office in Iceland.