AMS 2026 Priorities/Strategy Discussion: Thriving Through Disruptive Change (Jan, 2026)

We are in an extended period of rapid and disruptive change that is impacting all aspects of science, professional life, and the broader society that the AMS community serves. These changes are stressful and likely will alter the roles of the sectors in the weather, water and climate enterprise. Yet change can create enormous opportunities for: the advancement of science, improvements in the practice of science, and innovative applications of science.

There are three interrelated drivers of this disruptive change: **Societal transformation** (e.g., shifting capabilities and roles among public, private, and academic sectors; the information environment and the elevated impact of misinformation and disinformation; insularization and polarization; use of new communication media; the potential to enhance human resources and ingenuity; shifting capabilities, priorities, approaches of nations), **Technological advances** (e.g., LLMs, AI, big data, machine learning, computing capacity; social media; access to high-quality online education), **Environmental disturbances (local to global) and the solutions to address them** (e.g., climate change; direct effects of CO_2; decarbonization; land use; species extinctions; nitrogen deposition; PFAS).

Questions to promote (but not constrain) strategic discussions:

- What are the key challenges and opportunities for scientific advancement and, more importantly, for science to help humanity to succeed going forward?
- How can we best create a comprehensive approach to the advancement and use of science for public interest?
- How do these opportunities and challenges align with your organization and work?
- How do we all work together as effectively as possible?
- How do we ensure accountability to our Mission(s) and people?

How this relates to AMS's strategy: Science creates new opportunities and informs decision-making. Everyone could (perhaps should) benefit from scientific innovation (advances anywhere serve all). We see three areas of opportunity that, together, might constitute a systematic and comprehensive approach to the advancement and use of Earth and environmental system science to help humanity thrive to the fullest extent possible.

Priority 1: Convene and connect

We bring people together to share knowledge, collaborate, and enhance innovation.

Examples of what we do related to this priority:

- Strategic discussions and thought leadership (welcome and thank you!)
- Provide infrastructure for scientific and professional activities (meetings, workshops, working groups, volunteer structure, scientific publications, certifications)
- Create neutral venues for collaboration and exchange among professionals from the public, private, academic, and NGO sectors

Examples of potential new initiatives related to this priority:

- An AMS Strategic Plan for AI to Convene and Connect
- Information exchange between scientists and entrepreneurs

Priority 2: Science for people and the planet

We make science available and actionable, and champion the use of scientific understanding to improve lives and livelihoods. We engage with policymakers, stakeholders, and the public to promote a future in which all thrive.

Examples of what we do related to this priority:

- Engage policy-makers, stakeholders, the media, and the public
    - AMS Statements and Rapid Responses (www.ametsoc.org/statements)
    - Letters of support for science (NCAR sign-on and radiofrequency spectrum)
    - Policy Colloquia, Hill visits, and AMS meetings (e.g., the Washington Forum)
    - Public-private partnership events (National priorities discussions)

- Policy Studies *(www.ametsoc.org/studies)*
    - Needs and opportunities of the weather enterprise: special report and part 1
    - Economic analyses: the value chain and forecast valuation studies (Jeff Lazo)
    - In the public interest: public, private, academic, and NGO communities

Examples of potential new initiatives related to this priority:

- Maximizing the Potential of AI: An Analytical Assessment of the Opportunities, Challenges, and Possible Pathways of Navigating Them
- Grassroots advocacy for science (e.g., "Take 5 for Science")
- Enhanced communication and public engagement (including media)

Priority 3: To develop the workforce

We create and expand career opportunities to create and support pathways. We educate and develop new generations of scientists. We equip scientists and professionals with the skills and capabilities needed to tackle emerging societal opportunities and needs.

Some examples of what we do related to this priority:

- Student support (scholarships, fellowships, and the student conference)
- Certify professionals and offer new certificates/trainings
- AMS Policy Colloquia (June, 2026 agenda)

Examples of potential new initiatives related to this priority:

- Technical Readiness for Scientists and Professionals: A Comprehensive Guide and Strategy for the Future of the Weather, Water, and Climate Workforce (e.g., AI)
- Support for entrepreneurship
    - Private sector start-up accelerators; incubators; and advice (knowhow)
    - Rotating private-sector fellowship for academic and early-career scientists
- Workforce upskilling and transition support

These three areas of focus constitute an opportunity to help: 1) humanity benefit from science; 2) ensure that all life thrives on a planet that is increasingly small in comparison to the impacts of human activity; and 3) enable all people to contribute to their full potential.