



YERKES OBSERVATORY

Yerkes Observatory Appoints Deputy Director + Head of Science and Education

*Yerkes Future Foundation Recruits Innovative Leader to Create New
Research, Science, and Public Education Programs*



WILLIAMS BAY, Wis.—Yerkes Observatory, the birthplace of modern astrophysics, today announced the appointment of Dr. Amanda Bauer as its new **Deputy Director + Head of Science and Education**.

Dr. Bauer brings to Yerkes a background as a research astronomer, leading science communicator, and an innovative team builder with years of experience leading large-scale scientific enterprises. Dr. Bauer will assume the position in July, and her appointment marks yet another milestone in realizing the Observatory’s ambitious plans, which began when the Yerkes Future Foundation (YFF) secured ownership of the Observatory from the University of Chicago in 2020.

In her newly created role at Yerkes Dr. Bauer will serve as both the overall Deputy Director of the Yerkes Future Foundation and lead the science, research, telescope operations, and education programs of the Observatory.

Dr. Bauer has a track record of engaging diverse communities and scientific leadership in the United States and abroad. She is currently the Deputy Director of Operations for the Vera C. Rubin Observatory in Chile, one of the largest and most anticipated astronomy projects under construction in the world. In 2015, while serving as the first-ever Outreach Officer for the Australian Astronomy Observatory (AAO) in Sydney, she was named one of the Top 5 Under 40 Researchers and Science Communicators in Australia.

“I am incredibly honored to join the passionate and dedicated Yerkes team. Having spent my career focused on so many different aspects of how astronomical discovery is generated and communicated, this opportunity feels like the perfect culmination for inspiring creativity and scientific curiosity while engaging in modern exploration of the cosmos. What the Yerkes Future Foundation has achieved so far is exceptional and drives the great promise of what Yerkes Observatory can be for generations to come. I am excited to be part of the journey,” says Bauer.

Dennis Kois, Executive Director of Yerkes Observatory, noted *“It would be hard to overstate how truly excited those in the worlds of astronomy and science are to see Yerkes come back to life, and thus our search attracted an exceptional field of candidates. But even amongst that talented group Amanda’s intellect, knack for communicating complex ideas in clever ways, sense of humor, passion for astronomy*

and belief that Yerkes can contribute meaningfully to the future of science stood out clearly. I couldn't be more excited she's chosen to join us on this adventure."

Dianna Colman, board president of YFF, said, *"We are deeply committed to unlocking the Observatory's potential to contribute to astronomy research and science education on a global scale, and we have absolutely found the right scientist and leader to carry this meaningful mission forward. Amanda's scientific credentials are first rate and will take Yerkes to the next level; she's also a lovely human being who will be a stellar addition to our community."*

A native of Ohio, Dr. Bauer has served in highly visible roles including as the public face and voice of the Australian Astronomical Observatory (AAO) in Sydney, after receiving a Super Science Fellowship from the Australian Research Council. She launched and led the AAO social media streams, co-hosted a podcast for Radio National Australia, led public programs for thousands of participants and was a regular presence in the Australian media.

At Rubin Observatory, a brand-new facility with an 8.4-meter telescope in Chile and the largest digital camera ever built for astronomy, Dr. Bauer started as the Head of Education and Public Outreach. From the project's home base in Arizona, she used her vision and excitement about astronomy education and outreach to guide the construction of a unique public program while building a dynamic and effective team. She was then named Deputy Director of Rubin Operations where she helped define the strategic vision, the framework for achieving it, and contributed greatly to the successful proposal to fund the first 5 years of operation. Rubin will be imaging the entire visible night sky every 3-4 nights, generating petabytes of data—some of which, interestingly, will be followed up by astronomers who will examine the historic glass plates of those same galaxies and stars first imaged at Yerkes, making the Observatory one of the oldest and largest libraries of historic astronomical imagery on the planet.

Dr. Bauer holds a BS in Physics from the University of Cincinnati and a PhD in Astrophysics from the University of Texas at Austin and has authored or co-authored more than sixty professional publications on astronomy research and science outreach. Amanda will be relocating to Wisconsin with her daughter Ida Luna, her ukulele, and an eclectic collection of desert succulents.

Dr. Bauer was selected following a highly competitive search that elicited more than eighty qualified candidates with experience at leading universities, research institutions, and governmental science organizations around the globe. Executive Director Dennis Kois formed an advisory search committee comprised of leading astronomers, leaders of major U.S. observatories, and past leaders of Yerkes to assist with the process.

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About Yerkes Observatory

Yerkes Observatory is known globally as the birthplace of modern astrophysics and remains the home to the world's largest refracting telescope. Since 1897, the Observatory has welcomed world-renowned astronomers, astronauts, Nobel prize winners, scientists, and educators. Located on Geneva Lake in Williams Bay, Wisconsin, the Observatory houses multiple modern robotic telescopes (40" and 24" reflectors) still actively used for research in addition to

the "Great Refractor," a glass-plate library of 180,000 images currently being digitized for research use

in partnership with the University of Chicago, and several laboratories surrounded by 50 acres of grounds designed by the legendary firm Olmsted and Olmsted. In 2020, the Yerkes Future Foundation assumed long-term stewardship for preserving and expanding the Observatory and has thus far invested significantly in preserving and rebuilding this landmark in the history of science. The community-based Foundation has launched an initial \$25 million campaign to restore and maximize the Observatory's potential to contribute to global science and educational initiatives.

About the Scientific Legacy of Yerkes

Yerkes Observatory has a 125-year history of leading science, research, and astrophysics engineering initiatives that have transcended generations and been cited in the international scientific literature more than 10,000 times. Founded by renowned astronomer George Ellery Hale in 1892, the Observatory's laboratories produced the High-resolution Airborne Wideband Camera (HAWC) for NASA in 2012. Renowned astronomers and scientists who have walked the observatory's halls include Edwin Hubble, Otto Struve, Gerard Kuiper, Carl Sagan, NASA's first Chief of Astronomy Nancy Grace Roman, and Nobel prize-winners Albert Einstein and Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar.

For press inquiries, digital images or follow-up please contact Yerkes Director of External Affairs Walt Chadick at wchadick@yerkobservatory.org or 262-475-6001 (mobile).