



**For the Committee on Astronomy and Astrophysics (CAA) appointed by  
The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine**

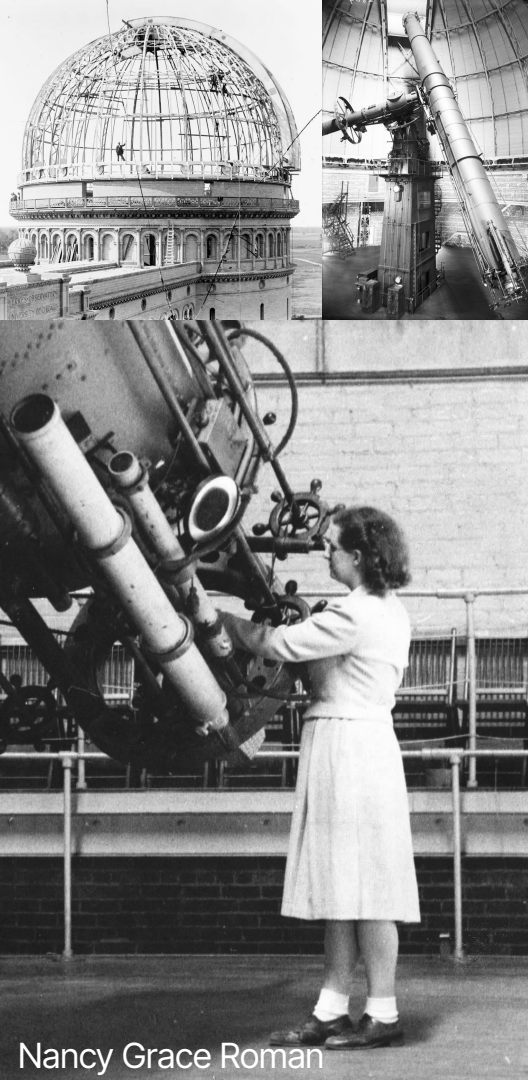


Deeply Rooted. Infinitely Curious.

**Dr. Amanda Bauer**

Deputy Director for Yerkes Observatory  
Head of Science and Education

March 2026



# REINTRODUCING YERKES

Founded in 1897 by George Ellery Hale and The University of Chicago.

Since 2020, Yerkes has operated as an independent non-profit.

Yerkes is a center for discovery where science, nature, history, and the arts meet to inspire curiosity, imagination, and connection across generations.

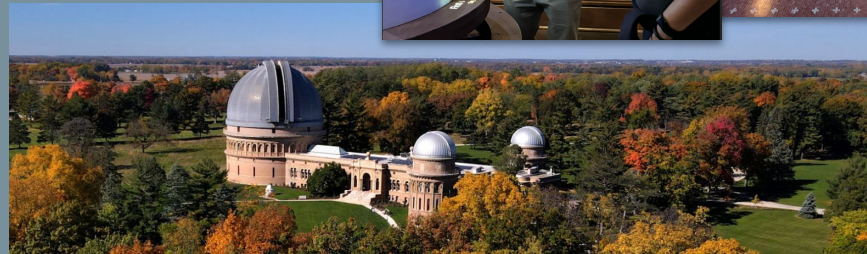
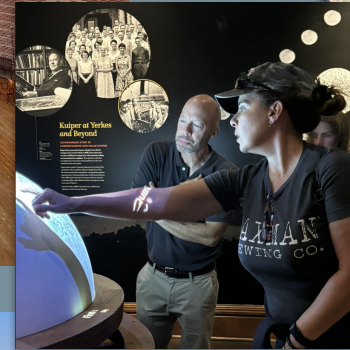
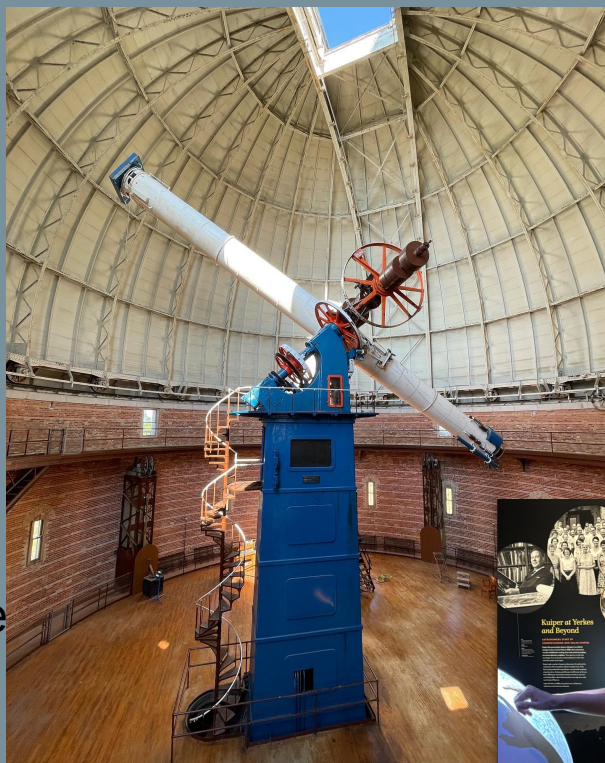
Home of the World's Largest Refracting Telescope and institution of scholars like Nancy Grace Roman, Edwin Hubble, Carl Sagan, Gerard Kuiper, and Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar.

Nancy Grace Roman

Our 130-year legacy is fuel for creativity, humor, and new ideas that keep Yerkes alive and relevant.

We provide a collaborative environment where science, nature, history, and the arts come together to create connections that make learning richer and more memorable.

We believe the best ideas come from unexpected connections between scientists and artists, students and elders.



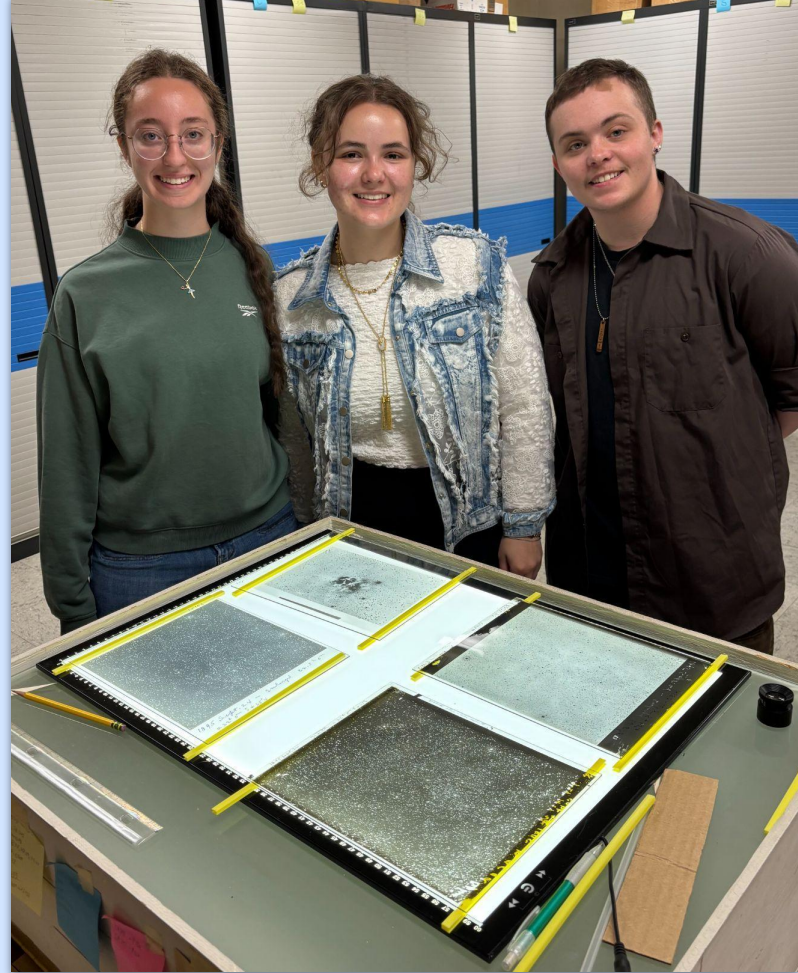
# Internships

A paid, nine-week research experience for 3 students on site in southern Wisconsin.

Research projects are rooted in time domain astronomy, where interns engage with our historic glass plates collection and compare to modern images taken with our 1-meter telescope.

We saw twice the number of applications for 2026.

The number of undergraduate degrees awarded is quickly outpacing the PhD positions available.



# Uniquely serving astronomy

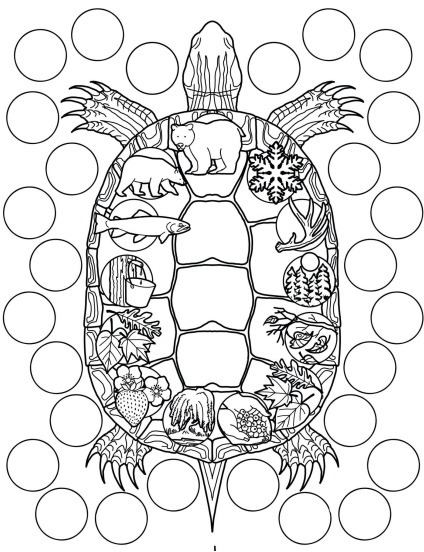
The Yerkes internship is open to graduating seniors, can serve as a type of bridge program, and is privately funded.

We integrate public engagement, science communication training, and work with visiting artists.

We offer a supported trip to the American Astronomical Society (AAS) winter meeting to present work if student is interested. This year one of our students won a Chambliss prize.

100% success rate for our graduates getting into graduate school or their STEM career path of choice.





## K-12 Programs

School visits include a tour and a hands-on activity developed by the Yerkes team or modified from existing online resources. We will be expanding options to include environmental science topics.

We are working with Potawatomi artist David Martin and elders from the Forest County Potawatomi, our closest Indigenous neighbors, to design a turtle shell coloring page that includes floral motifs representing the traditional Full moon names and lunar phases.

In addition to our programs for schools, home schoolers, families, and scouts, we offer scaffolded professional development training for K-5, middle school, and high school science educators.



# Professional Development

Sustained contact with students through their educators engages them far beyond what we can do alone

In March 2026, Wisconsin passed Assembly Bill 592: providing science professional development to educators through non-profit organizations. This pilot program launches with \$250k per year for 2 years.

The Yerkes PD program served as an example of a positive relationship with educators and non-profits and staff spoke in hearings at the WI Capitol.



# Summary



Yerkes Observatory has operated as a non-profit since 2020.

Internships cover a range of research-specific and science communication skills and have 100% success rate for graduates obtaining admission to grad school or relevant positions in STEM careers.

Professional Development for educators bringing STEM topics into their classrooms allows up to sustain engagement with students and increase impact.

We helped establish a statewide pilot project to connect non-profits with educators for STEM-related Professional Development programs.

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[yerkesobservatory.org](http://yerkesobservatory.org)



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