

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration



EXPLORE SOLAR SYSTEM & BEYOND

State of the Profession Discussion

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Astrophysics Advisory Committee

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NASA Newest Core Value



Inclusion – NASA is committed to a culture of diversity, inclusion, and equity, where all employees feel welcome, respected, and engaged.

To achieve the greatest mission success, NASA embraces hiring, developing, and growing a diverse and inclusive workforce in a positive and safe work environment where individuals can be authentic.

This value will enable NASA to attract the best talent, grow the capabilities of the entire workforce, and empower everyone to fully contribute.



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in Astrophysics and SMD

Enabling a community and stewarding the capabilities required to advance NASA's science objectives is one of NASA's roles

We must have compelling science priorities

- The important science questions require new and ambitious capabilities

We must be inclusive to attract the most capable researchers

- SMD has commissioned a NASEM study to identify the barriers to next generation mission Principal Investigators (<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/increasing-diversity-in-the-leadership-of-competed-space-missions>)
- NASA and SMD are prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility both internally and for NASA-selected and -funded projects and teams
- SMD has established internal groups: Anti-Racism Action Group and DEIA Working Group
 - Kartik Sheth on SMD Anti Racism Action Group on Day 3
- SMD has enacted process changes and evaluations: Dual Anonymous Peer Review, Equity Audits, Barrier Analysis
- SMD is incorporating DEIA requirements and evaluation into AOs and ROSES

SMD and the Astrophysics Division will take active steps over the next year to be a more inclusive and equitable organization.

State of the Profession

APAC Recommendations		Response
1	The APAC fully endorses, and the community welcomes, a clear statement that the NASA Astrophysics Division values the well-being and lives of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and recognizes their contributions to advancing the Astrophysics Division's strategic scientific, education, and technical enterprise.	Thomas Zurbuchen and Paul Hertz have made such clear statements at community meetings.
2	The APAC advises the Astrophysics Division to conduct a professionally led equity-audit of institutional racism within the Division.	The Astrophysics Division has initiated a professionally-led equity audit of institutional racism within the Division, conducted by an external organization.
3	The APAC strongly recommends ensuring BIPOC representation in future APAC membership.	BIPOC voices are, and will continue to be, among the diverse set of voices on the APAC.
4	The APAC recommends that NASA immediately consider including an evaluation criterion on "promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field" in the review for all Astrophysics Division proposals and directed work.	New requirements and a new evaluation criterion are being added to the Standard AO. Addressing it for ROSES and directed work will be considered by SMD as next steps.
5	The APAC recommends that the Astrophysics Division critically assess current programs and initiatives within the Division portfolio directed toward diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Division should examine why these mechanisms and means have not fully worked and assess what fundamental changes are required to break exclusive and, specifically, racist structures within these.	An internal Astrophysics Division R&A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force has been established, coordinating with parallel groups in other Divisions, includes support from DEIA expert contractor.
6	The APAC recommends that Astrophysics Division Projects and Programs explicitly authorize use of funds for Investigation, Project, and Program leads or their designees to participate in and engage at conferences organized to support BIPOC and other minority scientists, with a reporting requirement.	Paul Hertz has issued guidance to astrophysics leadership at NASA Centers encouraging such authorization (authority for use lies with Centers).
7	The APAC recommends establishing additional channels for more extensive community input in APAC discussions.	The Astrophysics Division has arranged for additional channels allowing extensive community input during APAC meetings, beginning with this October 2020 meeting.



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- Astrophysics R&A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force
 - Reviewing the criteria, processes, practices, and structures we have in place for soliciting and evaluating proposals.
 - Working together with a diverse outside community to identify barriers for underrepresented groups to participate in and benefit from our R&A programs.
 - Making actionable recommendations for lasting and meaningful change.

We must not let the current pandemic massively derail the careers of our future leaders

- SMD is prioritizing funded extensions to support graduate students, post docs, and early career researchers

NASA welcomes actionable and practical recommendations to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within astronomy and astrophysics