

Update on Mission Principal Investigator Development Initiative

Dear Colleagues:

As you know, I am passionate about building effective and innovative teams that achieve amazing results for NASA Science. NASA Science recognizes and supports the benefits of having diverse and inclusive scientific, engineering, and technology communities and fully expects that such values will be reflected in the composition of all mission and mission proposal teams. This past November, we hosted a mission principal investigator diversity workshop to understand where there could be areas for improvement. Based on the feedback and lessons learned from that workshop, I would like to share with you some exciting opportunities that will be forthcoming later this year. I hope that you will take advantage of these new offerings.

Based on the feedback from the workshop, we identified several actions we were going to implement to create some momentum forward:

1. Completed an SMD website update to provide members of the community with better access to information about the types of opportunities that are available for researchers who may be interested in becoming principal investigators. This site consolidates forecasts of upcoming solicitations, mission management resources, and early career opportunities into a single site. Visit <https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/new-pi-resources> for more information. Please provide feedback to Ellen Gertsen (ellen.gertsen@nasa.gov) if you feel that there are topics missing.

2. As of Fall 2018, and consistent with the recommendations at the panel, SMD introduced a pre-review process for all mission peer review panels to ensure diversity and reduce conflicts of interest. We will use this step from now on. We also encourage members of the science community to volunteer for these review panels by visiting <https://science.nasa.gov/researchers/volunteer-review-panels>.

3. Starting with ROSES 2019, conference codes of conduct are now required for all SMD-funded conferences. See Section 4.6 of the Topical Workshops, Symposia, and Conferences call for more information.

4. As of the Lunar and Planetary Science Conference in March 2019, we have restarted our research proposal writing workshops at major science conferences, again following the attendees' suggestions. Workshops will be held at several upcoming conferences, specifically SACNAS in October 2019, AGU in December 2019, AAS in January 2020, and LPSC in March 2020. Please provide feedback to Michael New (michael.h.new@nasa.gov) after you attend these workshops and also let us know if there are other good locations to do such a workshop.

5. SMD will actively include career development positions (i.e. deputies) and associated evaluation criteria as part of future Announcements of Opportunities. Language was added to Section 1.1 regarding the career development opportunities presented by Discovery and New Frontiers missions and encouraging proposers to utilize the missions to train the next generation of mission leaders. Evaluation Factors B-5 and C-4 were modified to include assessment of plans to utilize this opportunity. This, again, is a follow-up from a suggestion received at the workshop. Please visit <https://soma.larc.nasa.gov> for more information.

6. I will give a presentation in June that will summarize lessons learned from the statistical analysis of proposals that will talk about the characteristics and key mistakes that are most often associated with proposal success. We will announce the exact time within a few weeks and then stream the talk. This, too, was requested during the workshop.

SMD, in partnership with various members of the science community, is also developing information sessions and workshops for prospective principal investigators. These will include overview sessions at upcoming science conferences and hands-on workshops targeted towards people who are in the process of developing their first proposals. We are working to make these events free to attend and plan to hold them in multiple locations throughout the year, with the first such event targeted for Fall 2019. To subscribe to the mailing list to learn about these opportunities, please visit <https://lists.hq.nasa.gov/mailman/listinfo/hq-smdpi-workshop-outreach>. We want to reach the broadest audience possible and I encourage you to help spread the word about these opportunities.

Thank you again for your engagement and support for this important work. I know that some of these are small steps in the direction we all want to go, but I trust can see in our action both the sincerity and consistency in our approach.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Zurbuchen

Associate Administrator for the Science Mission Directorate