



Oregon NASA Space Grant Consortium

**2021-22**

**STudent Academic Research Review (STARR)  
Award Program**

**Open to students attending OSGC  
Community College and 4-Year Member Institutions**

**Program Guidelines**

**Release Date: May 19, 2021  
Applications Due: July 30, 2021**

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# STARR Award Program Guide

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# STARR Award Program Guide

## INTRODUCTION

A member of National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program (Space Grant), the Oregon NASA Space Grant Consortium (OSGC) supports the agency's objectives of fostering and encouraging careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and STEM education to develop a skilled, high-performing, capable, and diverse next-generation workforce. Access to experiential learning and research opportunities are crucial to enhancing a student's academic experience in order to meet the needs of NASA and the nation. OSGC programs are directed towards undergraduate students in STEM fields and designed to complement a student's academic career experience. In support of the national priority to increase diversity in STEM fields, women, individuals from underserved and underrepresented groups in the STEM fields, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to participate.

The Oregon Space Grant Student Academic Research Review (STARR) Award Program is directed towards STEM and STEM Education students attending our member community colleges and four-year universities who are interested in space science/aerospace-related careers. The STARR Program provides students an opportunity to apply for a one-year award to enhance and supplement their academic study in STEM and STEM education. These awards also serve to recognize student's achievements in these fields.

STARR awards are open to students in a broad range of STEM disciplines, including aerospace-related engineering and mathematics, as well as earth sciences, chemistry, biology, food science, and computer science relating to NASA's vision and mission. Students are encouraged to contact OSGC with questions about field of study eligibility.

## ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

Applicants must be enrolled and in good academic standing throughout the entire award period at one of the following OSGC member institutions.

Table 1: OSGC Affiliate Member Institutions and Representatives

<b>Community College Affiliate Member Institution</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Email</b>
Lane Community College	Dennis Gilbert	gilbertd@lanec.edu
Linn-Benton Community College	Kristina Holton	holtonk@linnbenton.edu
Oregon Coast Community College	Matthew Fisher	matthew.fisher@oregoncoast.edu
Portland Community College, Cascade Campus	Deborah Cochrane	dcochran@pcc.edu
Portland Community College, Rock Creek	Andy Hilt	andrew.hilt@pcc.edu
Portland Community College, Southeast Campus	Julia Betts	julia.betts@pcc.edu
Portland Community College, Sylvania Campus	Toby Dittrich	tdittrich@pcc.edu
Southwestern Oregon Community College	Aaron Coyner	aaron.coyner@socc.edu
<b>4-Year Affiliate Member Institution</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Email</b>
Eastern Oregon University	Colby Heideman	cheideman@eou.edu
George Fox University	Robert Hamilton	rhamilto@georgefox.edu
Oregon Institute of Technology	Eve Klopff	eve.klopff@oit.edu
Oregon State University	Kyle Niemeyer	Kyle.niemeyer@oregonstate.edu
Pacific University*	Kevin Carr	kcarr@pacificu.edu
Portland State University	Alex Ruzicka	Ruzickaa@pdx.edu
Southern Oregon University	Peter Wu	wu@sou.edu
University of Oregon	Greg Bothun	dkmatter@uoregon.edu
University of Portland	Christina Ivler	ivler@up.edu
Western Oregon University	William Schoenfeld	schoenfeldw@wou.edu

\*minority serving institution

## **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

STARR, a research review program, is a stepping stone opportunity designed to help students have a more comprehensive understanding of the research process and be better prepared for future hands-on research opportunities such as NASA internships, Research Experience for Undergraduates (REUs), or senior capstone projects. Applicants select a topic to review that involves current NASA-related research. Selected topics must align with one or more of NASA Mission Directorate's top priorities or speak to the challenges facing the execution of current missions. Topics should be specific and narrow in scope.

If awarded, STARR recipients will thoroughly review the selected research topic and write an original white paper. The white paper must include insight into the contributions of the research being conducted and demonstrate interdisciplinary applications of the research and how it might potentially extend to other areas of science or engineering relating to NASA's priorities and areas of emphasis. Students will not be conducting hands-on research and will not need access to onsite resources.

STARR recipients must identify a faculty member at their respective institution who has expertise relevant to the research being reviewed and who agrees to serve as faculty advisor on the project. The advisor must be willing to mentor the student, review/edit the student's work, and provide guidance throughout the process; however, white papers must ultimately be the original work of the student. Selected projects and advisors must be approved by the OSGC affiliate representative from the student's respective institution. In addition to the white paper, students attending 4-year institutions will be required to present their work at the OSGC Spring Symposium (virtual or in-person) or submit a recorded presentation.

## **AWARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **Award Funds**

A total of \$104,000 will be awarded in the 2021-22 STARR Program, contingent upon funding from NASA Office of STEM Engagement. STARR awards will be competitively awarded to students enrolled at an OSGC affiliated community college or 4-year institution. Awards will be made in two disbursements. Awardees will receive \$500 in October 2021 and the remainder of the award in May 2022 upon completion of deliverables. Awards are compensation of a student's time and effort; supplies/equipment purchases are prohibited. Terms and conditions vary by type of institution.

#### **Community College Student Requirements**

- White paper (6-8 pages, excluding title page, references, and appendices)
- Outline
- Midway Meetup
- \$3K per student award

#### **4-Year Institution Student Requirements**

- White paper (8-10 pages, excluding title page, references, and appendices)
- Outline
- Midway Meetup
- Presentation
- \$5K per student award

### **Duration**

STARR awards are a one-time, non-renewable, academic year-long award.

### **Number of Awards to be Funded**

Number of awards may vary by institution type; total dollar amount of awards not to exceed \$104,000.

- Community College – up to 15 awards
- 4-Year University – up to 18 awards

### **Equal Opportunity and Diversity**

Students from underserved groups and groups underrepresented in STEM fields, specifically Native American, African American, Latino, Hispanic, and Pacific Islander, women, and persons with disabilities are strongly

encouraged to apply. OSGC seeks to recruit applicants from a variety of higher-education member institutions and disciplines.

## **DATES AND DEADLINES: APPLICATION PROCESS**

- Application Deadline: **Friday, July 30, 2021**
- Letter of Recommendation Due: **Friday, August 6, 2021**
- Award Selections: **September 2021**
- Award Disbursements: **October 2021 and May 2022**

## **ELIGIBILITY**

STARR awards are open to undergraduate students who meet the following eligibility criteria:

### **Community Colleges**

- Student must be a US Citizen.
- Student must maintain good academic standing.
- Student is enrolled in a minimum of 6 credit hours per term in **STEM-related coursework** at an OSGC-affiliated community college at the time of application (spring 2021) and remains enrolled for the duration of the award (through spring 2022). Student may be dual-enrolled in an OSGC-affiliated community college and 4-year institution through the duration of the award.
- For community college STEM students not currently enrolled in STEM-related coursework, supplemental information may be provided, including but not limited to:
  - Documentation declaring a STEM-related major or degree path.
  - Documentation of degree plan provided by academic advisor (general or degree-specific), which includes STEM-related coursework.
  - Letter of recommendation from past STEM faculty member or mentor.

**Please discuss options with your OSGC affiliate representative to ensure criteria are adequately met.**

### **4-Year Institutions**

- Student must be a US Citizen.
- Student must maintain good academic standing.
- Student is enrolled in a minimum of 12 credit hours per term at an OSGC-affiliated 4-year institution at the time of application (spring 2021) and remains enrolled for the duration of the award (through spring 2022).
- Student is enrolled in STEM, STEM education coursework, or an MAT program during the 2021-22 academic year.

*See Table 1 for list of OSGC Member Institutions and Representatives.*

## **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND FORMAT GUIDELINES**

Application packets for the STARR awards must include the following:

- Letter of Intent
- Student Resume
- Project Description
- Timeline
- Faculty Advisor Statement of Support
- Letter of Recommendation
- Academic Transcript

Documents are to be single-spaced, using standard 8½ x 11 paper, in font not smaller than 12-point with a minimum of 1” margins. All pages must be numbered sequentially. Students will submit application packets online.

### **Letter of Intent (Page limit: 1 page)**

Includes the following:

- Describe the Plan of Study for your STEM academic goals throughout your undergraduate program.
- Express your interest in and commitment to a space science/aerospace related career.
- Briefly describe your skill sets and qualifications in context of this opportunity.
- Describe how this opportunity would benefit you and contribute to your academic and career goals and objectives.

### **Student Resume (Page limit: 1 page)**

Include relevant employment, education, and extra-curricular activities. Resume should include current contact information including email, phone, and mailing address.

### **Project Description (Page limit: 1 page)**

Includes the following:

- State the research topic you have selected to review and provide an overview of the topic. Include why you are interested in this particular subject.
- Briefly state how the topic substantively aligns with one or more of NASA Mission Directorate's top priorities and/or how it speaks to a specific challenge facing one of NASA's current missions or area of emphasis.

Topics should be specific/narrow in scope. Students are expected to refer to *Appendix A. Agency Information and Strategic Framework* and *Appendix B. Research Priorities for NASA Mission Directorates* for guidance when selecting a research topic.

Note: If selected for a STARR award, students will review the chosen topic and elaborate on how it aligns with NASA's top priorities and/or how it speaks to the challenges facing NASA's missions. Students should be prepared to offer insight into the contributions of the research and demonstrate interdisciplinary applications and how the research could potentially extend to other areas of science or engineering relating to NASA's top priorities and areas of emphasis.

### **Timeline and Milestones (Page limit: 1 page)**

Develop a timeline for your project that includes milestones and measurable outcomes. Refer to the *Dates and Deadlines: Deliverables* section for associated deadlines. Timelines are tools that help researchers stay on track to complete a project in the allotted time and should be shared with faculty advisors to ensure project deadlines are met in a timely manner.

### **Faculty Advisor Statement of Support (Page limit: 1 page)**

STARR applicants must identify a faculty member at their respective institution with expertise relevant to the research being reviewed and who agrees to serve as faculty advisor on the project. The advisor must be willing to provide guidance and mentorship throughout the process, participate in regularly scheduled check-ins with the student and the Midway Meetup, and review/edit the student's work prior to submitting deliverables. The selected faculty advisor must provide a Statement of Support acknowledging their role and expectations as advisor for the project. The Statement of Support is to be included in the online application packet submitted by the student. The Statement of Support does not serve as a letter of recommendation.

Advisors must be affiliated with an OSGC member institution; OSGC affiliate representatives may serve as faculty advisor on a project. Affiliate representatives may assist students in identifying a faculty member who has expertise relevant to a project.

### **Letter of Recommendation (Page limit: 2 pages)**

One letter of recommendation is required. The letter should specifically address your qualifications and merit for receiving a STARR Award. Students will be asked to provide contact information for the person providing the letter of recommendation. Upon submission of your application, this individual will receive an email request for the letter. The letter of recommendation will be due one week after the student application is due.

### **Academic Transcript (Page limit: As needed)**

A PDF of your academic transcript must be submitted with your online application. Unofficial transcripts from your college or university website are acceptable and should include record of the courses in which you are currently enrolled.

## **Online Application**

Complete application packets will be submitted online:

- Community college student applications: <https://spacegrant.net/apps/ors2>
- 4-Year institution student applications: <https://spacegrant.net/apps/ors1>

## **FACULTY ADVISORS/MENTOR INFORMATION**

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Faculty advisors are expected to have expertise relevant to the research being reviewed, and be willing and able to contribute insight and perspective to a project. Advisors must be willing to mentor the student by providing guidance throughout the process and review/edit the student's work prior to the student submitting deliverables, keeping in mind white papers must be original work of the student. Advisors are encouraged to help students understand the components of research and research review. Faculty advisors should be prepared to participate in regularly scheduled check-ins with the student to maintain progress and make certain milestones are met and deliverables are submitted on time. Advisors should plan to participate in the Midway Meetup.

Advisors must be affiliated with an OSGC member institution; OSGC affiliate representatives may also serve as faculty advisor on a project. Faculty advisors are required to provide a Statement of Support to be included in the student's online application submission.

## **REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

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Applications are evaluated for eligibility when received. Qualified applications will be reviewed by a diverse selection committee who will make recommendations for funding based on stated review criteria (see below). Preference may be given to women, individuals from underserved and underrepresented groups in the STEM fields, and individuals with disabilities.

### **Review Criteria**

- Academic achievement
- Strength of Letter of Intent
- STEM related Plan of Study
- Demonstration of Space Science/Aerospace related career goals
- Selected research review topic is in alignment with one or more of NASA Mission Directorate's top priorities and/or speaks to the challenges facing the execution of a current mission or area of emphasis.
- Strength of recommendation and faculty support

## **DATES AND DEADLINES: DELIVERABLES**

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- Student Profile Form: **September 2021**
- Midway Meetup: **February 2022**
- Outline Due: **April 8, 2022**
- White Paper Due: **May 6, 2022**
- Presentations: **May 2022**
- Spring Symposium: **May 20, 2022**

## **DELIVERABLES IF AWARDED**

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More detailed information pertaining to the following deliverables will be communicated directly with students who are selected to receive a STARR award.

### **Student Profile Form**

Students agree to complete an online confidential Student Profile Form when they accept the award. This information is used for reporting to NASA's Office of STEM Engagement and for longitudinal tracking purposes to evaluate the effectiveness of NASA's higher education programs.

### **Midway Meetup**

OSGC will host an online, virtual check-in for STARR recipients and mentors midway through the project. Participants will meet to discuss progress, solicit feedback, bounce ideas, ask questions, and share hurdles and solutions with fellow STARRs and mentors. OSGC leadership will facilitate the meeting and be available to answer questions relating to deliverables. The Midway Meetup will be held in early February 2022.

### **Descriptive Outline**

STARR recipients are required to submit a descriptive outline of the project approximately one month prior to the white paper due date. Descriptive outlines include introduction, main body, and conclusion and are limited to 2 pages.

### **White Paper**

Students selected to receive STARR awards are required to write an original white paper describing the findings of the research review of the selected topic, how it aligns with one or more of NASA Mission Directorate's top priorities, and/or how it speaks to the challenges facing the execution of current NASA missions. Students must include insight into the contributions of the research being conducted and demonstrate interdisciplinary applications of the research and how it might potentially extend to other areas of science and/or engineering relating to NASA's top priorities and areas of emphasis.

Students will not be conducting hands-on research and will not need access to onsite resources. Faculty advisors are encouraged to review the paper and offer guidance and edits, but white papers must ultimately be the original work of the student; plagiarism results in loss of award.

#### **Community College Students**

- White paper must be 6-8 pages, excluding title page, references, and appendices

#### **4-Year Institution Students**

- White paper must be 8-10 pages, excluding title page, references, and appendices

### **Presentation**

In addition to the white paper, STARR recipients attending 4-year institutions are required to present their work utilizing a PowerPoint presentation to an audience. Students may be given a choice of participating in the OSGC Spring Symposium, deliver a live presentation via OSGC social media, or submit a recorded presentation describing the research review project. Specific options will be presented at a later date. This requirement is for 4-year institution students only.

### **Contact Information**

The student agrees to notify OSGC of any changes in mailing address, email, and telephone number for contact purposes.

### **Information/Media Release**

The student grants permission to release and/or publish requested recipient information to NASA or other appropriate parties. 4-year institution students grant permission to release live or recorded presentations.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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Direct questions to Catherine Lanier, OSGC Associate Director, via email at [catherine.lanier@oregonstate.edu](mailto:catherine.lanier@oregonstate.edu) or by phone at 541.737.2414.

Visit the Oregon Space Grant Consortium website: <http://spacegrant.oregonstate.edu>.

STARR Award Program details: <https://spacegrant.oregonstate.edu/scholarships-and-undergraduate-fellowships>



## **APPENDIX A: AGENCY INFORMATION AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

NASA's current topics and relevant missions are listed below. Students should use these priorities to guide them in the selection of a STARR research review topic.

### **Humans in Space**

International Space Station (ISS) - Commercial Crew Program (CCP) - NASA Astronauts - Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Economy

### **Moon to Mars**

Commercial Lunar Payload Series (CLPS) Initiative - Lunar Gateway - Artemis Mission - Space Launch System (SLS)

### **Earth**

Air – Climate - Hazards - Water, Oceans, and Ice - Land

### **Space Tech**

Space Travel - Living in Space - Manufacturing, Materials, and 3-D Printing - Robotics - Science Instruments - High-Tech Computing

### **Flight**

Green Aviation - Future Aircraft - Supersonic Flight - Reducing Flight Delays - Unmanned Aircraft

### **Solar System and Beyond**

Planets, Moons, and Dwarf Planets - The Search for Life and Exoplanets - The Sun - Stars and Galaxies - Black Holes - Dark Energy and Dark Matter

### **Current High-Profile NASA Missions**

- Artemis Program
- Commercial Crew Program
- Curiosity Mars Rover
- Hubble Space Telescope
- InSight Mars Lander
- International Space Station
- James Webb Space Telescope
- Juno: Mission of Jupiter
- Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter
- Mars Perseverance Rover
- New Horizons: Pluto and Beyond
- OSIRIS-Rex Asteroid Mission
- Parker Solar Probe

### **NASA Vision**

To reach for new heights and reveal the unknown so that what we do and learn will benefit all humankind.

### **NASA Mission**

Lead an innovative and sustainable program of exploration with commercial and international partners to enable human expansion across the solar system and bring new knowledge and opportunities back to Earth. Support growth of the Nation's economy in space and aeronautics, increase understanding of the universe and our place in it, work with industry to improve America's aerospace technologies, and advance American leadership.

### **Strategic themes that make up the foundation of the 2018 Strategic Plan and NASA's goals**

- **DISCOVER** - Expand human knowledge through new scientific discoveries
- **EXPLORE** - Extend human presence deeper into space and to the Moon for sustainable long-term exploration and utilization
- **DEVELOP** - Address national challenges and catalyze economic growth

- **ENABLE** – Optimize capabilities and operations

### **NASA 2018 Strategic Plan**

[https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/nasa\\_2018\\_strategic\\_plan.pdf](https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/nasa_2018_strategic_plan.pdf)

NASA’s vision and mission draw support from the organizational structure of the Mission Directorates, each with a specific responsibility.

### **NASA’s Mission Directorates**

**Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate (ARMD):** Enables a safer, more secure, efficient, and environmentally friendly air transportation system

- Transforms aviation with research to dramatically reduce the environmental impact of flight, and improves aircraft and operations efficiency while maintaining safety in increasingly crowded skies. ARMD also generates innovative aviation concepts, tools, and technologies for development and maturation by the aviation community. <https://www.nasa.gov/aeroresearch>

**Human Exploration and Operations (HEOMD):** Operates the International Space Station and prepare for human exploration beyond low Earth orbit

- Leads human exploration in and beyond low Earth orbit by developing new transportation systems and performing scientific research to enable sustained and affordable human life outside of Earth. HEOMD also manages space communication and navigation services for the Agency and its international partners. <http://www.nasa.gov/directorates/heo/home/>

**Science Mission Directorate (SMD):** Exploring the Earth-Sun system, our solar system, and the universe beyond.

- Expands the frontiers of Earth science, heliophysics, planetary science, and astrophysics. Using robotic observatories, explorer craft, ground-based instruments, and a peer-reviewed portfolio of sponsored research, SMD seeks knowledge about our solar system, the farthest reaches of space and time, and our changing Earth. <http://science.nasa.gov/>

**Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD):** Develops the crosscutting, advanced pioneering new technologies needed for current and future missions, benefiting the aerospace industry and other agencies, and addressing national needs.

- Pursues transformational technologies that have high potential for offsetting future mission risk, reducing cost, and advancing existing capabilities. STMD uses merit-based competition to conduct research and technology development, demonstration, and infusion of these technologies into NASA’s missions and American industry. This mission directorate is being refocused as a new Exploration Research & Technology (ER&T) organization to support exploration as a primary customer. <http://www.nasa.gov/directorates/spacetech/home/index.html>.

**The Mission Support Directorate (MSD):** Enables the Agency’s missions by managing institutional services and capabilities.

- MSD is actively reducing institutional risk to NASA’s current and future missions by improving processes, stimulating efficiency, and providing consistency and uniformity across institutional standards and practices. <https://www.nasa.gov/msd>.

See *Appendix B. Research Priorities for NASA Mission Directorates* for detailed Mission Directorate descriptions.

## APPENDIX B. RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR NASA MISSION DIRECTORATES

Note: This information is per NASA Office of STEM Engagement and current as of 6/28/2019.

### I. Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate Research

Aeronautics Research Missions Directorate (ARMD) conducts high-quality, cutting-edge research that generates innovative concepts, tools, and technologies to enable revolutionary advances in our Nation's future aircraft, as well as in the airspace in which they will fly. ARMD programs will facilitate a safer, more environmentally friendly, and more efficient national air transportation system. Using a Strategic Implementation Plan, NASA ARMD sets forth the vision for aeronautical research aimed at the next 25 years and beyond. It encompasses a broad range of technologies to meet future needs of the aviation community, the nation, and the world for safe, efficient, flexible, and environmentally sustainable air transportation. Additional information on ARMD can be found at: <http://www.aeronautics.nasa.gov>.

### II. Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate Research

Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate (HEOMD) provides the Agency with leadership and management of NASA space operations related to human exploration in and beyond low-Earth orbit. HEOMD also oversees low-level requirements development, policy, and programmatic oversight. The International Space Station (ISS), currently orbiting the Earth with a crew of six, represents the NASA exploration activities in low-Earth orbit. Exploration activities beyond low Earth orbit include the management of Commercial Space Transportation, Exploration Systems Development, Human Space Flight Capabilities, Advanced Exploration Systems, and Space Life Sciences Research & Applications. The directorate is similarly responsible for Agency leadership and management of NASA space operations related to Launch Services, Space Transportation, and Space Communications in support of both human and robotic exploration programs. Additional information on HEOMD can be found at: (<http://www.nasa.gov/directorates/heo/home/index.html>)

#### Areas of Interest

##### *Human Research Program*

The Human Research Program (HRP) is focused on investigating and mitigating the highest risks to human health and performance in order to enable safe, reliable, and productive human space exploration. The HRP budget enables NASA to resolve health risks in order for humans to safely live and work on missions in the inner solar system. HRP conducts research, develops countermeasures, and undertakes technology development to address human health risks in space and ensure compliance with NASA's health, medical, human performance, and environmental standards.

##### *Space Biology*

The Space Biology research has three primary goals:

- Effectively use microgravity and other characteristics of the space environment to enhance our understanding of fundamental biological processes;
- Develop the scientific and technological foundations for a safe, productive human presence in space for extended periods and in preparation for exploration;
- Apply this knowledge and technology to improve our nation's competitiveness, education, and the quality of life on Earth.

These goals are achieved by sponsoring research studies in five program elements to contribute basic knowledge of biological adaptation to spaceflight to accelerate solutions to biomedical problems affecting human exploration of space as well as human health on Earth: Microbiology; Cell and Molecular Biology; Plant Biology; Animal Biology; and Developmental Biology

Current Space Biology emphases include:

- Using ground-based facilities to characterize the effects of space-like radiation on biological systems. NASA is interested in projects that will characterize how radiation exposure impacts living organisms during a single lifecycle, or over multiple generations.
- Using ground-based simulations to study how spaceflight conditions might impact plant and microbial interactions and growth. Questions of interest to NASA include, but are not limited to, whether spaceflight induces changes in the virulence of plant pathogens and/or whether spaceflight might change benign or commensal microbes on plants into pathogenic ones.
- Using ground-based facilities to simulate a range of gravitational levels on biological specimens to understand and characterize the dose-response curve between 0 and 2 G for various biological systems to determine A) if there are G-level thresholds required to trigger gravity-specific responses in living organisms, and B) the effect that exposure to levels of gravity similar to those encountered on Mars (.38 G) or the moon (0.16 G), and/or hypergravity has on living organisms.

Further details about Space Biology goals, objectives and progress can be found at the [Space Biology Website](#).

### *Physical Science Research*

The Physical Science Research Program, along with its predecessors, has conducted significant fundamental and applied research, both which have led to improved space systems and produced new products offering benefits on Earth. NASA's experiments in various disciplines of physical science reveal how physical systems respond to the near absence of gravity. They also reveal how other forces that on Earth are small compared to gravity, can dominate system behavior in space.

The Physical Science Research Program also benefits from collaborations with several of the International Space Station international partners—Europe, Russia, Japan, and Canada—and foreign governments with space programs, such as France, Germany and Italy. The scale of this research enterprise promises new possibilities in the physical sciences, some of which are already being realized both in the form of innovations for space exploration and in new ways to improve the quality of life on Earth.

Research in physical sciences spans from basic and applied research in the areas of:

- Biophysics: biological macromolecules, biomaterials.
- Combustion science: spacecraft fire safety, droplets, gaseous (premixed and non- premixed), solid fuels, supercritical reacting fluids.
- Complex fluids: colloidal systems, liquid crystals, foams, gels, granular flows.
- Fluid physics: adiabatic two-phase flow, boiling and condensation, capillary flow, interfacial phenomena, cryogenics storage and handling.
- Fundamental physics: space optical/atomic clocks, quantum test of equivalence principle, cold atom physics, critical point phenomena, dusty plasmas.
- Materials science: glasses and ceramics, granular materials, metals, polymers and organics, semiconductors.

Implementing Centers: NASA's Physical Sciences Research Program is carried out at the Glenn Research Center (GRC), the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and the Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC). Further information on physical sciences research is available at <http://issresearchproject.nasa.gov/>

### *Engineering Research*

- Spacecraft: Guidance, navigation and control; thermal; electrical; structures; software; avionics; displays; high speed re-entry; modeling; power systems; interoperability/commonality; advanced spacecraft materials; crew/vehicle health monitoring; life support.
- Propulsion: Propulsion methods that will utilize materials found on the moon or Mars, “green” propellants, on-orbit propellant storage, motors, testing, fuels, manufacturing, soft landing, throttle-able propellants, high performance, and descent.

- Robotic Systems for Precursor Near Earth Asteroid (NEA) Missions: Navigation and proximity operations systems; hazard detection; techniques for interacting and anchoring with Near Earth Asteroids; methods of remote and interactive characterization of Near Earth Asteroid (NEA) environments, composition and structural properties; robotics (specifically environmental scouting prior to human arrival and later to assist astronauts with NEA exploration); environmental analysis; radiation protection; spacecraft autonomy, enhanced methods of NEA characterization from earth-based observation.
- Robotic Systems for Lunar Precursor Missions: Precision landing and hazard avoidance hardware and software; high-bandwidth communication; in-situ resource utilization (ISRU) and prospecting; navigation systems; robotics (specifically environmental scouting prior to human arrival, and to assist astronaut with surface exploration); environmental analysis, radiation protection.
- Data and Visualization Systems for Exploration: Area focus on turning precursor mission data into meaningful engineering knowledge for system design and mission planning of lunar surface and NEAs. Visualization and data display; interactive data manipulation and sharing; mapping and data layering including coordinate transformations for irregular shaped NEAs; modeling of lighting and thermal environments; simulation of environmental interactions including proximity operations in irregular micro-G gravity fields and physical stability of weakly bound NEAs.
- Research and technology development areas in HEOMD support launch vehicles, space communications, and the International Space Station. Examples of research and technology development areas (and the associated lead NASA Center) with great potential include:

#### *Processing and Operations*

- Crew Health and Safety Including Medical Operations (Johnson Space Center (JSC))
- In-helmet Speech Audio Systems and Technologies (Glenn Research Center (GRC))
- Vehicle Integration and Ground Processing (Kennedy Space Center (KSC))
- Mission Operations (Ames Research Center (ARC))
- Portable Life Support Systems (JSC)
- Pressure Garments and Gloves (JSC)
- Air Revitalization Technologies (ARC)
- In-Space Waste Processing Technologies (JSC)
- Cryogenic Fluids Management Systems (GRC)

#### *Space Communications and Navigation*

- Coding, Modulation, and Compression (Goddard Spaceflight Center (GSFC))
- Precision Spacecraft & Lunar/Planetary Surface Navigation and Tracking (GSFC)
- Communication for Space-Based Range (GSFC)
- Antenna Technology (Glenn Research Center (GRC))
- Reconfigurable/Reprogrammable Communication Systems (GRC)
- Miniaturized Digital EVA Radio (Johnson Space Center (JSC))
- Transformational Communications Technology (GRC)
- Long Range Optical Telecommunications (Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL))
- Long Range Space RF Telecommunications (JPL)
- Surface Networks and Orbit Access Links (GRC)
- Software for Space Communications Infrastructure Operations (JPL)
- TDRS transponders for launch vehicle applications that support space communication and launch services (GRC)

#### *Space Transportation*

- Optical Tracking and Image Analysis (KSC)
- Space Transportation Propulsion System and Test Facility Requirements and Instrumentation (Stennis Space Center (SSC))

- Automated Collection and Transfer of Launch Range Surveillance/Intrusion Data (KSC)
- Technology tools to assess secondary payload capability with launch vehicles (KSC)
- Spacecraft Charging/Plasma Interactions (Environment definition & arcing mitigation) (Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC))

### III. Science Mission Directorate Research

Science Mission Directorate (SMD) leads the Agency in four areas of research: Earth Science, Heliophysics, Planetary Science, and Astrophysics. SMD, using the vantage point of space to achieve with the science community and our partners a deep scientific understanding of our planet, other planets and solar system bodies, the interplanetary environment, the Sun and its effects on the solar system, and the universe beyond. In so doing, we lay the intellectual foundation for the robotic and human expeditions of the future while meeting today's needs for scientific information to address national concerns, such as climate change and space weather. At every step we share the journey of scientific exploration with the public and partner with others to substantially improve science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education nationwide. Additional information on SMD can be found at: (<http://nasascience.nasa.gov>)

#### Areas of Interest

SMD has developed science objectives and programs to answer fundamental questions in Earth and space sciences in the context of our national science agenda. The knowledge gained by researchers supporting NASA's Earth and space science program helps to unravel mysteries that intrigue us all.

- What drives variations in the Sun, and how do these changes impact the solar system and drive space weather?
- How and why are Earth's climate and environment changing?
- How did our solar system originate and change over time?
- How did the universe begin and evolve, and what will be its destiny?
- How did life originate, and are we alone?

Each of the SMD's four science divisions – Heliophysics, Earth Science, Planetary Science, and Astrophysics – makes important contributions to address national and Agency goals. The NASA 2018 Strategic Plan reflects the direction NASA has received from our government's executive branch and Congress, advice received from the nation's scientific community, the principles and strategies guiding the conduct of our activities, and the challenges SMD faces. Specifically,

#### Heliophysics Division

Heliophysics encompasses science that improves our understanding of fundamental physical processes throughout the solar system, and enables us to understand how the Sun, as the major driver of the energy throughout the solar system, impacts our technological society. The scope of heliophysics is vast, spanning from the Sun's interior to Earth's upper atmosphere, throughout interplanetary space, to the edges of the heliosphere, where the solar wind interacts with the local interstellar medium. Heliophysics incorporates studies of the interconnected elements in a single system that produces dynamic space weather and that evolves in response to solar, planetary, and interstellar conditions.

The Agency's strategic objective for heliophysics is to **understand the Sun and its interactions with Earth and the solar system, including space weather**. The heliophysics decadal survey conducted by the National Research Council (NRC), *Solar and Space Physics: A Science for a Technological Society* (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/13060/solar-and-space-physics-a-science-for-a-technological-society>), articulates the scientific challenges for this field of study and recommends a slate of design reference missions to meet them, to culminate in the achievement of a predictive capability to aid human endeavors on Earth and in space. The fundamental science questions are:

- What causes the Sun to vary?
- How do the geospace, planetary space environments and the heliosphere respond?
- What are the impacts on humanity?

To answer these questions, the Heliophysics Division implements a program to achieve three overarching goals:

- Explore the physical processes in the space environment from the Sun to the Earth and throughout the solar system
- Advance our understanding of the connections that link the Sun, the Earth, planetary space environment, and the outer reaches of our solar system
- Develop the knowledge and capability to detect and predict extreme conditions in space to protect life and society and to safeguard human and robotic explorers beyond Earth

## **Earth Science Division**

Our planet is changing on all spatial and temporal scales and studying the Earth as a complex system is essential to understanding the causes and consequences of climate change and other global environmental concerns. The purpose of NASA's Earth science program is to advance our scientific understanding of Earth as a system and its response to natural and human-induced changes and to improve our ability to predict climate, weather, and natural hazards.

NASA's ability to observe global change on regional scales and conduct research on the causes and consequences of change position it to address the Agency strategic objective for Earth science, which is to advance knowledge of Earth as a system to meet the challenges of environmental change, and to improve life on our planet. NASA addresses the issues and opportunities of climate change and environmental sensitivity by answering the following key science questions through our Earth science program:

- How is the global Earth system changing?
- What causes these changes in the Earth system?
- How will the Earth system change in the future?
- How can Earth system science provide societal benefit?

These science questions translate into seven overarching science goals to guide the Earth Science Division's selection of investigations and other programmatic decisions:

- Advance the understanding of changes in the Earth's radiation balance, air quality, and the ozone layer that result from changes in atmospheric composition (Atmospheric Composition)
- Improve the capability to predict weather and extreme weather events (Weather)
- Detect and predict changes in Earth's ecosystems and biogeochemical cycles, including land cover, biodiversity, and the global carbon cycle (Carbon Cycle and Ecosystems)
- Enable better assessment and management of water quality and quantity to accurately predict how the global water cycle evolves in response to climate change (Water and Energy Cycle)
- Improve the ability to predict climate changes by better understanding the roles and interactions of the ocean, atmosphere, land and ice in the climate system (Climate Variability and Change)
- Characterize the dynamics of Earth's surface and interior, improving the capability to assess and respond to natural hazards and extreme events (Earth Surface and Interior)
- Further the use of Earth system science research to inform decisions and provide benefits to society

Two foundational documents guide the overall approach to the Earth science program: the NRC 2007 Earth science decadal survey (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11820/earth-science-and-applications-from-space-national-imperatives-for-the>) and NASA's 2010 climate-centric architecture plan ([https://smd-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/science-pink/s3fs-public/atoms/files/Climate\\_Architecture\\_Final.pdf](https://smd-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/science-pink/s3fs-public/atoms/files/Climate_Architecture_Final.pdf))

The former articulates the following vision for Earth science research and applications in support of society: Understanding the complex, changing planet on which we live, how it supports life and how human activities affect its ability to do so in the future is one of the greatest intellectual challenges facing humanity. It is also one of the most challenges for society as it seeks to achieve prosperity, health, and sustainability.

The latter addresses the need for continuity of a comprehensive set of key climate monitoring measurements, which are critical to informing policy and action, and which other agencies and international partners had not planned to continue. NASA's ability to view the Earth from a global perspective enables it to provide a broad, integrated set of uniformly high-quality data covering all parts of the planet. NASA shares this unique knowledge with the global community, including members of the science, government, industry, education, and policy-maker communities.



## Planetary Science Division

Planetary science is a grand human enterprise that seeks to understand the history of our solar system and the distribution of life within it. The scientific foundation for this enterprise is described in the NRC planetary science decadal survey, *Vision and Voyages for Planetary Science in the Decade 2013-2022* (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/13117/vision-and-voyages-for-planetary-science-in-the-decade-2013-2022>). Planetary science missions inform us about our neighborhood and our own origin and evolution; they are necessary precursors to the expansion of humanity beyond Earth. Through five decades of planetary exploration, NASA has developed the capacity to explore all of the objects in our solar system. Future missions will bring back samples from some of these destinations, allowing iterative detailed study and analysis back on Earth. In the future, humans will return to the Moon, go to asteroids, Mars, and ultimately other solar system bodies to explore them, but only after they have been explored and understood using robotic missions.

NASA's strategic objective in planetary science is to **ascertain the content, origin, and evolution of the solar system and the potential for life elsewhere**. We pursue this goal by seeking answers to fundamental science questions that guide NASA's exploration of the solar system:

- How did our solar system form and evolve?
- Is there life beyond Earth?
- What are the hazards to life on Earth?

The Planetary Science Division has translated these important questions into science goals that guide the focus of the division's science and research activities:

- Explore and observe the objects in the solar system to understand how they formed and evolve
- Advance the understanding of how the chemical and physical processes in our solar system operate, interact and evolve
- Explore and find locations where life could have existed or could exist today.
- Improve our understanding of the origin and evolution of life on Earth to guide our search for life elsewhere
- Identify and characterize objects in the solar system that pose threats to Earth, or offer resources for human exploration

In selecting new missions for development, NASA's Planetary Science Division strives for balance across mission destinations, using different mission types and sizes. Achievement of steady scientific progress requires a steady cadence of missions to multiple locations, coupled with a program that allows for a consistent progression of mission types and capabilities, from small and focused, to large and complex, as our investigations progress. The division also pursues partnerships with international partners to increase mission capabilities and cadence and to accomplish like-minded objectives.

See Section 4.3 of the NASA 2014 Science Plan for specifics, including missions currently in operation, in formulation or development, and planned for the future.

## Astrophysics Division

Astrophysics is the study of phenomena occurring in the universe and of the physical principles that govern them. Astrophysics research encompasses a broad range of topics, from the birth of the universe and its evolution and composition, to the processes leading to the development of planets and stars and galaxies, to the physical conditions of matter in extreme gravitational fields, and to the search for life on planets orbiting other stars. In seeking to understand these phenomena, astrophysics science embodies some of the most enduring quests of humankind.

Through its Astrophysics Division, NASA leads the nation on a continuing journey of transformation. From the development of innovative technologies, which benefit other areas of research (e.g., medical, navigation, homeland security, etc.), to inspiring the public worldwide to pursue STEM careers through its stunning images of the cosmos taken with its Great Observatories, NASA's astrophysics programs are vital to the nation.

NASA's strategic objective in astrophysics is to **discover how the universe works, explore how it began and evolved, and search for life on planets around other stars**. Three broad scientific questions flow from this objective:

- How does the universe work?
- How did we get here?



- Are we alone?

Each of these questions is accompanied by a science goal that shapes the Astrophysics Division's efforts towards fulfilling NASA's strategic objective:

- Probe the origin and destiny of our universe, including the nature of black holes, dark energy, dark matter and gravity
- Explore the origin and evolution of the galaxies, stars and planets that make up our universe
- Discover and study planets around other stars, and explore whether they could harbor life

The scientific priorities for astrophysics are outlined in the NRC decadal survey *New Worlds, New Horizons in Astronomy and Astrophysics* (<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12951/new-worlds-new-horizons-in-astronomy-and-astrophysics>). These priorities include understanding the scientific principles that govern how the universe works; probing cosmic dawn by searching for the first stars, galaxies, and black holes; and seeking and studying nearby habitable planets around other stars.

The multidisciplinary nature of astrophysics makes it imperative to strive for a balanced science and technology portfolio, both in terms of science goals addressed and in missions to address these goals. All the facets of astronomy and astrophysics—from cosmology to planets—are intertwined, and progress in one area hinges on progress in others. However, in times of fiscal constraints, priorities for investments must be made to optimize the use of available funding. NASA uses the prioritized recommendations and decision rules of the decadal survey to set the priorities for its investments.

NASA's Astrophysics Division has developed several strategies to advance these scientific objectives and respond to the recommendations outlined in the decadal survey on a time horizon of 5-10 years. The successful development of JWST is an Agency priority. Since its re-baseline in 2011, the project has remained on schedule and within budget for an October 2018 launch. JWST and the science it will produce are foundational for many of the astronomical community's goals outlined in the 2010 decadal survey. NASA's highest priority for a new strategic astrophysics mission is the Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST), the number one priority for large-scale missions of the decadal survey. NASA plans to be prepared to start a new strategic astrophysics mission when funding becomes available. NASA also plans to identify opportunities for international partnerships, to reduce the Agency's cost of the mission concepts identified, and to advance the science objectives of the decadal survey. NASA will also augment the Astrophysics Explorer Program to the extent that the budget allows. Furthermore, NASA will continue to invest in the Astrophysics Research Program to develop the science cases and technologies for new missions and to maximize the scientific return from operating missions.

See Section 4.4 of the NASA 2014 Science Plan for specifics, including missions currently in operation, in formulation or development, and planned for the future.

#### **IV. Space Technology Mission Directorate Research**

Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD) is responsible for developing the crosscutting, pioneering, new technologies, and capabilities needed by the agency to achieve its current and future missions. STMD rapidly develops, demonstrates, and infuses revolutionary, high-payoff technologies through transparent, collaborative partnerships, expanding the boundaries of the aerospace enterprise. STMD employs a merit-based competition model with a portfolio approach, spanning a range of discipline areas and technology readiness levels. By investing in bold, broadly applicable, disruptive technology that industry cannot tackle today, STMD seeks to mature the technology required for NASA's future missions in science and exploration while proving the capabilities and lowering the cost for other government agencies and commercial space activities.

Research and technology development take place within NASA Centers, in academia and industry, and leverages partnerships with other government agencies and international partners. STMD engages and inspires thousands of technologists and innovators creating a community of our best and brightest working on the nation's toughest challenges. By pushing the boundaries of technology and innovation, STMD allows NASA and our nation to remain at the cutting edge. Additional information on the Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD) can be found at: ([http://www.nasa.gov/directorates/spacetech/about\\_us/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/directorates/spacetech/about_us/index.html))

## Areas of Interest

Space Technology Mission Directorate (STMD) expands the boundaries of the aerospace enterprise by rapidly developing, demonstrating, and infusing revolutionary, high-payoff technologies through collaborative partnerships. STMD employs a merit-based competition model with a portfolio approach, spanning a wide range of space technology discipline areas and technology readiness levels. Research and technology development take place at NASA Centers, academia, and industry, and leverages partnerships with other government agencies and international partners.

STMD executes its mission according to the following tenets:

- Advancing transformative and crosscutting technologies that can be directly infused into future missions;
- Investing in a comprehensive portfolio covering low to high technology readiness levels;
- Competitively selecting research by academia, industry, and NASA Centers based on technical merit;
- Executing with lean structured projects with clear start and end dates, defined budgets and schedules, established milestones, and project level authority and accountability;
- Operating with a sense of urgency and informed risk tolerance to infuse quickly or terminate judiciously;
- Partnering with other NASA Mission Directorates, other government agencies, and the private sector to leverage resources, establish customer advocacy, and support US commercial aerospace interests;
- Delivering new inventions, enabling new capabilities and creating a pipeline of NASA and national innovators

Current space technology topics of particular interest include:

- Advanced manufacturing methods for space and in space
- Autonomous in-space assembly of structures and spacecraft
- Ultra-lightweight materials for space applications
- Materials and structures for extreme environments (high temperature, pressure)
- Extreme environment (including cryogenic) electronics for planetary exploration
- Advanced robotics for extreme environment sensing, mobility, and manipulation
- Deep space optical communication
- Extremely High Frequency microwave technologies for communication, remote sensing, and navigation
- Advanced power generation, storage, and transfer for deep space missions
- Advanced entry, decent, and landing systems for planetary exploration
- Efficient in situ resource utilization to produce items required for long-duration deep space missions including fuels, water, oxygen, food, nutritional supplements, pharmaceuticals, building materials, polymers (plastics), and various other chemicals
- Radiation mitigation for deep space crewed missions
- Biological approaches to environmental control and life support systems
- Autonomous systems for deep space missions
- Advanced telescope technologies for exoplanet imaging
- Low size, weight, and power components for small spacecraft including high-bandwidth communication from space to ground, inter-satellite communication, relative navigation and control for swarms and constellations, precise pointing systems, power generation and energy storage, thermal management, system autonomy, miniaturized instruments and sensors, robotic assembly/manufacturing, and in-space propulsion
- Enabling technologies for low-cost small spacecraft launch vehicles
- Advancements in engineering tools and models supporting Space Technology focus areas