



Sharing the Adventure with the Public: Communicating the Value and Excitement of “Grand Questions” of Space Science and Exploration

Statement of Task

An ad hoc committee will plan and conduct a workshop to explore key questions that are a major focus of the nation's space research program and identify effective ways for conveying to the public the value and excitement of what we might learn from and the activities employed in addressing these topics. The workshop will feature invited presentations and discussions to consider five “grand” questions that encompass many of the principal intellectual objectives of the nation's past, present and future activities in space science and exploration.

1. Are we alone?
2. Understanding the Universe: How did it begin and how is it evolving?
3. Understanding the solar system: How did it begin and how is it evolving?
4. How can we better understand the climate, Sun interaction?
5. How could Human Space Exploration proceed?

The discoveries and achievements of the past 50 years, and potential achievements that can be expected in the next 50 years, including specific targets of the next 10 years, for each of these questions, will be addressed at the workshop. An agenda will be developed with topics to examine ways to best articulate and best inform the public about these potential achievements and the activities that NASA will undertake to carry out the requisite science and exploration. Additional topics will be defined to include potential improvements in communication efforts, including how NASA views its public outreach responsibilities, as a means of enhancing the level of public understanding and “ownership” of these programs. A major focus of the workshop will be on ways to better sustain public understanding of, interest in and involvement with NASA science and exploration efforts that might take several years to decades to unfold. An individually-authored summary of the workshop will be issued