PRESENTATIONS THROUGH THE NASA SMD SCIENTIST SPEAKERS BUREAU. C. Shupla¹, S. Buxner², J. Grier², S. Shipp¹, B. Meinke³, N. Gross⁴, R. Low⁵, ¹Lunar and Planetary Institute (3600 Bay Area Blvd, Houston, TX 77058, shupla@lpi.usra.edu), ²Planetary Science Institute (1700 East Fort Lowell Rd, Tucson, AZ 85719, buxner@psi.edu), ³Space Telescope Science Institute (3700 San Martin Dr, Baltimore, MD, 21218, meinke@stsci.edu), ⁴Boston University (725 Commonwealth Ave, Boston MA 02215, gross@bu.edu), ⁵IGES (7373 Olde Stage Rd, Boulder CO 80302, rusty_low@strategies.org).

Introduction: The NASA Science Mission Directorate (SMD) Scientist Speaker’s Bureau is accepting speaker requests from educational institutions. NASA SMD-funded scientists and engineers, and other astronomers, heliophysicists, earth scientists, and planetary scientists interested in giving presentations are still welcome to enter their data into the system. There is particular need for young scientists, such as graduate students and post-doctoral researchers, and women and people of diverse backgrounds.

The intent of this new system is to enable educators and institutions to contact scientists and engineers who are interested in giving presentations, based upon the topic, logistics, and audience.

Requesting a Speaker: This system is designed to generate a list of potential speakers based upon an educator’s request (based upon the details submitted in the request and the scientists’ own preferences, such as their availability to travel, willingness to present online or in person, interest in presenting to different age groups and sizes of audience, and topics they are interested in addressing), and enable the educator to contact them by automatically generating and sending an email to the scientist selected by the educator. The request form is currently available online at www.lpi.usra.edu/education/speaker/request/.

Scientists and Engineers Entries: All NASA-funded scientists and engineers and other astronomers, heliophysicists, earth scientists, and planetary scientists interested in giving presentations are invited to enter their information into the system. Aside from name, organization, location, bio, and (optional) photo and website, the information is not made public; instead, it is used to help match scientists with the requests being placed.

The system continues to accept entries at http://www.lpi.usra.edu/education/speaker/.

Need for a Speaker’s Bureau: There has been a continuing call for scientists to become involved in education. AAAS stated, “To broaden science learning opportunities within and beyond the classroom, members of the scientific community can be recruited to participate in K–12 education as observers, guest speakers, tutors, and consultants.” [1] One of the most common ways for scientists to interact with students, adults, and general public audiences is to give presentations regarding their science. Yet those involved in education, such as teachers, education specialists, and museum and planetarium educators, do not have a simple way to connect with those planetary scientists, Earth scientists, heliophysicists, and astronomers who are interested and available to speak with their audiences. This system is designed to help meet the need for connecting potential audiences to interested scientists.

The NASA SMD Scientist Speaker’s Bureau is functioning in collaboration with the NASA Speakers Bureau (www.nasa.gov/about/speakers), which occasionally offers online trainings to its members; members of the SMD Scientist Speaker’s Bureau are welcome to attend these as well and need to indicate if they would like to receive emails about them, by notifying the SMD planetary forum at SMDSpeaker@lpi.usra.edu.

Design: When a speaker request is submitted and the requesting organization has selected one of the potential scientists meeting the criterion, the system automatically sends an email to the scientist regarding the request. At this point, it is up to the scientist to respond to the email request and communicate directly with the person who has created the request, to either confirm details or to indicate that they are unavailable to give that presentation. It is strongly suggested that scientists provide a response within 10 days of receiving the emailed request. The requests are monitored to ensure responses are made. If scientists are unable to fulfill requests for presentations, they may respond directly to the requestor or may ask that the message be relayed by the planetary forum at SMDSpeaker@lpi.usra.edu; the requestor will be encouraged to
use the system again to find an alternate scientist and repeat the request.

Travel reimbursement. No funding will be provided by the Speaker’s Bureau for travel; if funding is needed, the scientist should discuss it with the institution before accepting the request to speak.

Making changes or opting out of the system. If a registered scientist would like to cancel their participation in this program, there is a mechanism on the website to remove the data from the system at any time. If there are changes in the information (for instance, updates to the topics or a change in address or institution), please contact SMDSpeaker@lpi.usra.edu.

References:
[1] American Association for the Advancement of Science (1998) Blueprints for Reform, Ch. 9 Teacher Education.