

Cross-AG Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Working Group: 2023 Priorities. M. M.

McAdam¹, J. Rathbun², M. C. McCanta³, A. Deutsch¹, J. Knicely⁴, M. Neveu^{5,6}, C. L. Dinwiddie⁷, J. H. Roberts⁸, B. J. Thomson³, L. H. Regoli⁸, N.R. Izenberg⁸, J. Stopar⁹, L. R. Gaddis⁹, P. Mane⁹, E. Bjonnes⁹, P. Prem⁹, K. A. Bennett¹⁰, A. Venkatesan¹¹ and the Cross-AG IDEA Working Group. ¹NASA Ames. ²PSI. ³ University of Tennessee Knoxville. ⁴ University of Alaska Fairbanks. ⁵ University of Maryland College Park. ⁶NASA GSFC. ⁷SwRI. ⁸ JHU Applied Physics Laboratory. ⁹ LPI. ¹⁰ USGS, ¹¹University of San Francisco.

Introduction: In 2019, the planetary science community identified the need for a group focused on equity and justice matters. While similar organizations existed in different spaces (e.g., the Professional Culture & Climate Subcommittee [PCCS] for the Division of Planetary Sciences ([DPS]) of the American Astronomical Society), this IDEA Working Group (WG) formed during a NASA Outer Planets Assessment Group (OPAG) meeting. Motivated by the Planetary Science and Astrobiology Decadal Survey call for white papers, the WG listened to the needs of the community, organized and submitted white papers on matters of equity, inclusion and justice, and presented findings to NASA. Because IDEA issues affect all aspects of planetary science, it was decided early on that this group would be organized as an informal cross-AG (i.e., Assessment or Analysis Group) WG. As the Cross-AG IDEA WG defined and refined its vision and goals, NASA vocally supported its work and invited its input in the Planetary Science Advisory Council (PAC) Meetings in 2022.

Members of the WG submitted 27 ‘workforce’ white papers to the [Planetary Science and Astrobiology Decadal Survey \(2023—2032\)](#) [1] which include 242 co-authors. The IDEA Working Group members wrote about many topics, including mental health, and co-created collaborations with indigenous communities. For a full list of topics, please follow this [link](#).

Current Recommendations to the PAC Recommendations: The main purpose of the Cross-AG IDEA WG is to gather input from and represent the planetary science community by providing consensus recommendations to the PAC regarding equity and justice matters. At the December 2022 PAC meeting, the WG provided several consensus [recommendations](#); if these are adopted by the PAC, NASA would be required to respond. Recommendations are created with feedback from the IDEA WG’s NASA Headquarters Liaisons.

The Cross-AG IDEA WG provided these recommendations at the December 2022 PAC meeting:

- 1.(1) We endorse the following PAC recommendation from the June 2022 meeting [2]:
 - a. (1a) The PAC encourages the Planetary Science Division (PSD) to explore creative ways to obtain and analyze planetary science

community workforce demographic data within NASA’s legal confines; for example, working with professional societies and cross-AG forums. Such efforts should also be done in collaboration with social scientists with expertise in writing and administering such information collection. In future PAC meetings, the PAC requests to hear presentations from those who have successfully run previous planetary science workforce surveys and other relevant information collections to explore potential solutions and collaborations to fulfill this need for collecting demographic workforce data.

- b. (1b) The PAC recommends that NASA provide a code of conduct (CoC) template for all NASA-supported activities, which includes a reporting and accountability structure. For each activity, the CoC should be introduced at the beginning of the event and posted where appropriate to encourage all participants to be both mindful [of the CoC] and accountable [to it].
- c. (1c) The PAC endorses the recommendations from the Advancing Inclusion Diversity Equity and Accessibility in Planetary Science Conference (#IDEACon) [report](#) [3] and requests from NASA a response to the report’s top recommendations for funding agencies at the next PAC meeting. The PAC urges further coordination between NASA and community efforts, with one option being the outward-facing IDEA-coordination position as well as development of a centralized repository of relevant resources, as recommended in the #IDEACon report. An existing model that may inform efforts to address this is the Planetary Data Ecosystem (PDE), where a paid, non-civil servant Chief Scientist has a mission to engage the community, is supported by an internal NASA group, and provides institutional support for a central information repository.
- d. (1d) We further suggest that PAC consider moving the last recommendation in this list up to the NASA Advisory Council as requesting

an outward-facing IDEA position at the Science Mission Directorate (SMD) level (instead of PSD). This was also a suggestion of the #IDEACon report.

2. (2) We request NASA explore the legality of using diversity (including race, gender, disability, LGBTQ+ identities, etc.) of a proposed team as a selection criterion for selecting and extending missions, projects, facilities, and other large teams.
3. (3) We believe Inclusion Plans could be a way to increase IDEA in planetary science. We suggest that NASA work with the community to develop resources (including funding members of the community) to educate the community. This should include education on why inclusion plans are important and best practices for writing them.

In addition to these recommendations, we also made the following suggestions to the PAC:

Now that several Decadal Surveys have included a task to survey the state of the profession (including Astro 2010 [4], Astro 2020 [5], Planetary 2023 [1], Helio 2025), we suggest that NASA review best practices in implementing such a survey. For example, there were many lessons learned between the 2010 and 2020 Astronomy Decadal Surveys, and we should ensure that positive momentum continues throughout all current and future surveys.

We believe there is significant support for including diversity as a team-selection criterion. For example, the 2019 Discovery Mission AO [6] included this language: “NASA recognizes and supports the benefits of having diverse and inclusive scientific, engineering, and technology communities.” Similarly, support for these efforts has been expressed by the highest levels of leadership in the agency.

Lastly, Inclusion Plans seem like a promising way to promote equity and justice in planetary science. NASA’s Inclusion Plan proposal requirements are a newly added requirement for a proposal section, akin to those for the requirement, added a few years ago, for Data Management Plans, which are now a standard part of ROSES proposals. Inclusion Plans are the proposer’s statement on how they will foster inclusion as a part of their scientific research. NASA recently held an Inclusion Plan Best Practices Workshop and launched an Inclusion Plan Resource [website](#). However, the labor of developing and implementing these plans, and of developing them and that associated with gathering relevant resources, will require additional support by NASA in concert with the community. Indeed, the labor of equity and justice work has historically and presently largely been volunteer-based because of the lack of

institutional support. Without concerted institutional funding and support, Inclusion Plan development efforts are therefore likely to be led by committed individuals, particularly those who have identities that have been historically excluded from planetary science, at the expense of advancing their career. For example, NASA needs to level the playing field should seek to ensure equitable access to IDEA resources, given that some between PIs who have ready access to well-qualified IDEA experts (perhaps through a University or HR office) and others. Because Inclusion Plans are becoming a new part requirement of many SMD proposals, perhaps this is another recommendation to raise to the NAC (or NAC IDEA subcommittee, if it has formed).

Organization and Membership: The WG is an informal, self-nominated, and presently unfunded group of ~100 professionals in planetary science across all disciplines, career stages, and employment circumstances. We continuously seek new members for the Cross-AG IDEA WG. *All voices in the community are needed and welcomed. If you wish to join, please email planetaryedi+subscribe@psi.edu.* We have new member introductions at each meeting, as needed.

The group is led by two co-chairs who are selected through a formal nomination and selection process. Each co-chair serves a 2-yr term, and their responsibilities include managing logistics, coordinating the group, and seeking feedback on recommendations and PAC presentations. The current co-chairs are Drs. Julie Rathbun and Maggie McAdam. In addition to the co-chairs, the WG has a Steering Committee composed of 1 to 2 representatives from nine AGs (including Exoplanets Analysis Group) and two NASA Headquarters Liaisons. The co-chairs meet regularly with the Steering Committee to collaborate on new initiatives. Finally, the WG holds monthly meetings on the third Thursday at 3 pm Eastern /12 pm Pacific time.

References:

- [1] NASEM. 2022. Origins, Worlds, and Life: <https://doi.org/10.17226/26522>.
- [2] Final PAC Findings, from meeting [June 21—23, 2022](#).
- [3] Rivera-Valentín, E.J. and K. Lynch, 2022, [A Consensus Report on Recommendations from the 2022 Advancing IDEA in Planetary Science Conference](#), doi: 10.5281/zenodo.6656887.
- [4] NASEM, 2010. New Worlds, New Horizons in Astronomy and Astrophysics.
- [5] NASEM, 2021. Pathways to Discovery in Astronomy and Astrophysics for the 2020s.
- [6] Discovery [AO 2019](#).