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Earth and Space Science in the 21st Century: A Call for Action

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Earth and space science are critically important so that society can benefit from effective solutions to address global environmental conditions, mitigate the impact of climate change, and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. For that benefit, society needs evidence and facts on which to develop effective policies. External forces such as growing populism, the rise of social media and “fake news”, along with what Oxford calls the Post Truth World, are countervailing forces to societal acceptance and acknowledgement of evidence and facts. In addition, the reward and recognition system in science undervalues societal engagement and science graduate programs offer little training in effective ways to communicate and collaborate with external stakeholders. This talk will explore these dynamics and suggest actions that the science community can undertake to position Earth and space science as the science for society in the 21st century.