



New Moon! The NASA Lunar Science Institute Education and Outreach Program

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Abstract

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has a clear set of goals and objectives related to education and public outreach. These goals follow directly from NASA's mission "to inspire the next generation of Scientists and Explorers."

The NASA Lunar Science Institute (NLSI) has adopted these goals as a backbone of our education program and made Education and Outreach major pillars in its foundation and Mission Statements.

In this talk we will look at how the NLSI Education and Public Outreach (EPO) program has been a major element in preparing the next generation of scientists and in sharing with the public the excitement of discoveries we make when we explore the Moon.

1. Introduction

The NASA Lunar Science Institute is a new organization that supplements and extends existing NASA lunar science programs. Supported by the NASA Science Mission Directorate (SMD) and the Exploration Mission Directorate (EMD), the NLSI is managed by the NASA Ames Research Center and is composed by dispersed teams across the nation working together to help lead the agency's research activities related to NASA's lunar exploration goals. Competitively selected team investigations will focus on one or more aspects of lunar science -- investigations of the Moon (including lunar samples), from the Moon, and/or on the Moon. The NLSI also has an international partnership program that provides collaborative opportunities for the global science community. At this time the NLSI counts 7 national teams and 7 international nodes.

1.1 Mission Statement

The Mission of the NLSI and its member investigators is to advance the field of lunar science by:

- 1) conducting collaborative research in lunar science, investigating the Moon itself and using the Moon as a unique platform for other investigations;
- 2) enabling cross-disciplinary partnerships throughout the lunar science community;
- 3) providing scientific and technical perspectives to NASA on its lunar research programs and missions;
- 4) training the next generation of lunar scientists; and
- 5) encouraging Education and Public Outreach (EPO) through formal education content development, informal student programs and participatory public events.

2. Education and Public Outreach (EPO)

The NASA Lunar Science Institute (NLSI) EPO program supports and continues NASA's tradition of investing in the Nation's education programs with the goal of inspiring, engaging, educating, and employing, the next generation of lunar scientists and engineers. This is apparent through the multitude of efforts in promoting the public understanding and appreciation of the Moon and Lunar Science and Exploration; by building bridges between formal and informal Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education; and supporting informal education and public outreach programs.

6. Summary and Conclusions

The NLSI continues to play a major role in contributing to the development of the STEM workforce in disciplines needed to achieve NASA's strategic goals through a portfolio of Interests.

The NASA Lunar Science Institute (NLSI) supports a vigorous education effort aimed towards developing the next generation of lunar scientists.