

NASA Lunar Science Institute: The first year

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Abstract

Founded in April 2008, the NASA Lunar Science Institute (NLSI) is a virtual institute which connects domestic and international teams through commercial and academic web-based tools into a cohesive institute “without walls.” The NLSI has emerged as a worldwide scientific leader through its efforts to promote lunar science not only in the United States but through its international teams. Scientific topics covered by NLSI range from science “of the Moon” including studies of early bombardment, lunar interior, the exosphere and plasma environment and geochemistry; science “on the Moon” including the habitation potential of the lunar poles; and science “from the Moon” including astrophysical and heliospheric observations using the Moon as a unique observational platform. The first year of NLSI’s scientific operations saw the publication of over 40 peer-reviewed journal articles, the continuation of the Lunar Science Forum as the largest lunar science centric conference in the world, and beginning the education and training of a new generation of lunar scientists. This paper summarizes these results, with a discussion of future plans for the Institute.