

# View from Planetary Science and Astronomy

Kelsi Singer

Southwest Research Institute - Principal Scientist

Deputy PI on NASA's New Horizons Mission

# My Background

- Astronomy & Planetary Geophysics
- NASA Spacecraft Missions
- Professional development lead for the DPS/AAS since ~2009  
(American Astronomical Society, Division for Planetary Sciences)
- Women in Astronomy
- Outreach to under-represented K-12 students

But I am by no means able to represent ALL of the great IDEA work done by many many people in Astro/Planetary in this short presentation 😊.



Take away from Astronomy/Planetary:

Many different IDEA efforts

=

A significant difference over time

Everything in this presentation is something I have seen be effective in one or more instances.

# 3 Overarching Areas



1. Information/Awareness → the community in general
2. Professional culture and climate → current participants in the field
3. Specific partnership programs → future participants in the field



# 1. Information/Awareness

- Data collection/stats
  - Understandably, people want to know what or how big a problem is before spending resources (time/money) on it.
  - Demographics can help you see the forest, topical surveys can help with understanding the trees.
- Creating space for these topics
  - Like these panels!
  - Or many other ways (some on following slides)

## 2. Professional culture and climate

- Normalizing discussion of sometimes difficult and complex topics
  - E.g., regular events at conferences – such as discussion/networking groups, IDEA plenaries, etc.
- Statements of support – top-down or bottom-up
  - Topical, self-organized groups
  - Professional organizations, funding agencies, leadership
- Codes of conduct for all groups (large and small)
  - Gives each group a chance to discuss this amongst themselves and serves as a reminder on professional interactions.



## 2. Professional culture and climate

- Accommodations at conferences as able
  - E.g., hybrid meetings and closed captioning
  - Inquiring in the registration process or post-meeting surveys what accommodations would be helpful
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> party ombudsperson or reporting tools
- Formal training/programs
  - As an entrée to group discussions
  - Or for specific activities: e.g., implicit bias training for award committees or hiring committees

# 3. Specific (authentic) partnerships

- Partnering with professional societies
  - E.g., National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP)
  - E.g., Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)
- Partnering with schools/universities and general outreach
  - NASA already does a lot of this! This is a great area to continue to leverage!
- Highlighting career paths
  - To show the diversity of how people come into this field
  - E.g., the Women in Planetary Science blog




My personal view after working in this area for a long time:

**Active work & strategic interventions**  
are necessary  
to move the needle on diversity and  
inclusion in our field.

This is how you break the “chicken and egg” cycle of  
people not wanting to enter or stay in the field  
because there are no people like them in the field.



A vibrant cosmic background image featuring a complex network of filaments and structures in shades of blue, purple, and orange, set against a dark, star-filled space. The image is framed by a black border.

Everyone can play a role,  
small or large,  
in creating an inclusive  
community!