Astro 2020
Decadal Survey on Astronomy and Astrophysics.

nas.edu/astro2020
Survey Structure (Background)

- **Steering Committee (20 members)**
  - plan overall review process, in consultation with NAS
  - synthesize outputs from the 13 science, program, and state of profession panels into an overall decadal strategy and survey report
  - member serves on each panel to facilitate communication, coordination

- **Science Panels (6 panels, 8-11 members each)**
  - review all science white papers, review science advances since Astro2010, identify high-priority scientific questions and discovery areas for the coming decade

- **Program Panels (6 panels, 12 members each)**
  - review relevant project/program APC’s, assess proposed projects in terms of science return and priorities, technical readiness, risk, cost

- **State of the Profession and Societal Impacts (1 panel, 15 members)**
  - review health and demographics of the astronomy and astrophysics community, identify milestones and actions for the coming decade
Impacts and Response to COVID-19

• From mid-March all panel meetings conducted remotely
  – some panels directly affected but completed meetings

• Astro2020 Steering committee meetings went virtual starting March

• Core principal has been to balance maintaining momentum with considering the well-being of survey participants and staff
  – Many participants are balancing tele-work with home-schooling etc
Progress Since Covid

• SC chairs and NAS had conversations with agency leadership to get guidance
  – Basic guidance unchanged (for now)
  – Time pressure for survey release comes from NSF
• Program panels completed deliberations (some remote)
• Virtual steering committee meetings
  – Meeting #3 (virtual) March 25-26 focused on briefings from international agencies
  – Meeting #4 (virtual) May 4 - 6 focused on reports from program panels
  – Meeting #5 (virtual) June 23-26 will be follow-up on program panel reports
Plan Forward

• Commitment to maintaining forward progress
  – Steering committee continues to meet via zoom weekly
  – Virtual meetings continue, albeit with reduced significantly efficiency compared to in-person

• Unknowns
  – Will the SC be able to meet in person for final deliberations?
  – If not, how effectively can key decisions be finalized virtually?
  – How much will Covid disruptions continue to impact time commitments of survey members

• Impact on survey delivery
  – Minimum is estimated at two months (March/April 2021 compared to January 2021)
  – Commitment on part of chairs/NAS to minimize the slip within constraints
Questions?

*NB:* Now that deliberations are under way, we cannot comment on specific projects, missions, proposals, or white papers.
Technical, Risk, & Cost Evaluation (TRACE; formerly known as CATE)

- Independent evaluation of project/activity concepts for technical risk, maturity and cost/schedule
- TRACE process will provide an analysis of technology development needs and an independent cost assessment
- Analysis (and the survey) recognizes most concepts evaluated are early stage (pre-Phase A)
- Process is accommodating the varying levels of definition and maturity of implementation plans