



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Office of
Science

DOE, NASA & NSF comments on Astro2020 Recommendations

Astronomy & Astrophysics Advisory Committee

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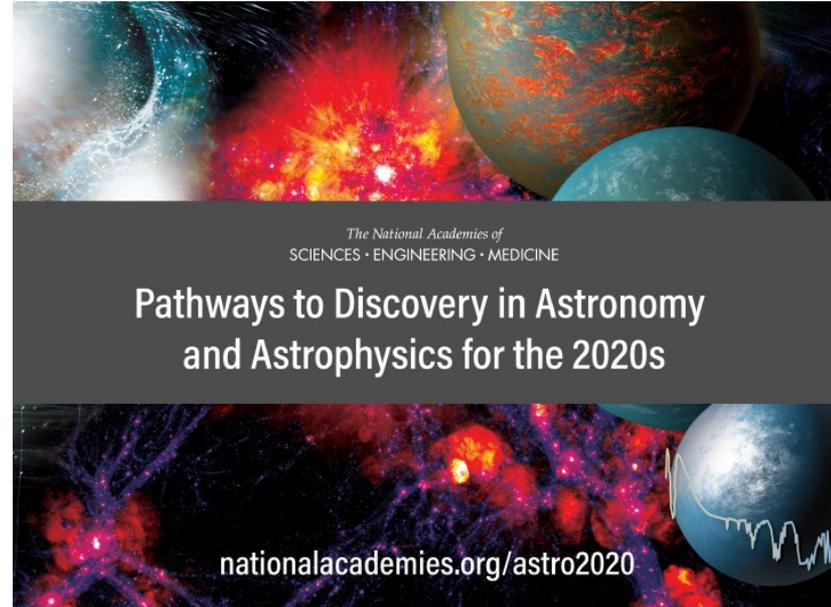
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Astro2020 – Pathways to Discovery in Astronomy and Astrophysics for the 2020s

National Academies Decadal Survey of Astronomy and Astrophysics was released Nov. 4, 2021. Charged & supported by DOE, NSF and NASA

- The 3 agencies appreciate all the hard work the National Academies, the Astro2020 Chairs, and the Community have done in carrying out the study and providing the report.
- We are fully committed to considering the report and addressing the recommendations.



We have been carrying out meetings regarding the joint recommendations.

→ A path forward to respond to the demographic recommendations is described here.

→ Recommendations Related to Proposal Demographics & Data

Recommendation (p. 3-29): NASA, NSF, and DOE should implement a cross-agency committee or working group tasked with establishing a consistent format and policy for regularly collecting, evaluating, and publicly reporting demographic data and indicators pertaining at a minimum to outcomes of proposal competitions.

Recommendation (p. 4-3): The National Science Foundation, NASA, and the Department of Energy should release data on proposal success rates on an annual basis and should track metrics that allow them to analyze statistically what is being supported.

Astro2020: Path Forward for Addressing Demographics Recommendations

The agencies are fully committed to addressing the needs for greater understanding of demographics of funding opportunity applicants and awardees to understand any disparities and identify agency policies or processes that contribute these disparities. This is a Federal responsibility.

- Critical to this understanding is the collection and evaluation of demographic data of applicants and awardees, and transparency to the community.
- The policies and procedures that set the requirements for the collection and dissemination of demographic information are established by Federal policies, rules, and regulations. These are primarily 1) the Privacy Act, the Paperwork Reduction Act, and 2) Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines for how demographic information may be collected.
 - Agencies may further develop their own policies and procedures, subject to the requirements of Federal policies, including OMB approvals.

Astro2020: Path Forward for Addressing Demographics Recommendations

As an initial step in addressing the Astro2020 recommendation it is appropriate for DOE, NASA, and NSF to

1. identify current policies, procedures, and practices regarding collection, evaluation, and sharing of demographic information
2. define what changes each agency is considering or intends to make (if needed) to these policies, procedures, and practices in order to collect, evaluate, and publicly report (at the appropriate level) on success rates in solicitations related to astronomy and astrophysics.
3. outline the near-term and long-term actions the agencies will take to address these changes

→ The agencies will prepare a single spreadsheet with this information.

- **We would appreciate the AAAC advice on the scope of this draft spreadsheet during this meeting.**
- Once the information is collected and presented to the AAAC, the agencies plan to charge AAAC to review the summary of policies and procedures, current state of practices, and plans, and provide feedback and advice on the agencies' efforts.

Draft Demographics Information spreadsheet

DOE, NASA, and NSF will prepare a spreadsheet that summarizes the information for each agency. Responses will be structured uniformly where possible.

The DRAFT scope of the spreadsheet is:

1. Federal policies and procedures that govern agency demographic data collection and dissemination.
2. Agency-specific policies and procedures that provide further requirements or guidance for agency collection and dissemination of demographic data.
3. The mechanisms (processes and business systems) the agencies use to collect demographic information from applicants. (e.g., Grants.gov/OMB standard form; agency-specific awards management system, etc.)
4. Who the agency collects demographic information on? (e.g., Principal Investigators, Key Personnel, other project staff [postdocs, graduate students])
5. What demographic information is collected from individuals? Define the demographic categories (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, veteran status), and what are the offered response options provided in each of these categories? Include what is optional and what is required.
6. What additional information is collected by the agency on applicants related to supporting institutions underrepresented in the Federal research portfolio in these fields? (e.g., institution type, rural status, socioeconomic status of the region of the institution)

Draft Demographics Information spreadsheet

7. What barriers exist in collecting demographic information from the community through your agency's business processes?
8. What barriers to the collection and dissemination of demographic information does the agency have that are related to Federal policies and procedures?
9. What barriers to the collection and dissemination of demographic information does the agency have that are related to agency-specific policies and procedures?
10. What barriers to the collection and dissemination of demographic information does the agency have that are related to agency-resources, including business systems?
11. What changes are needed in order for the agency to fully address the Astro2020 recommendation regarding the collection, evaluation, and public reporting on demographic data and success rates? Included changes related to the categories above (method of data collection, Federal policies, agency-specific policies, resources including business systems).
12. What are the agency's near-term and long-term plans for implementing these changes?

Astro2020: Path Forward for Addressing Demographics Recommendations – Current Efforts

→ There are a number of ongoing community efforts and interagency efforts related to the Astro2020 demographics recommendations.

The AAAC may wish to request briefings on the scope, status and results of these efforts, including:

The White House ***Equitable Data Working Group***, established by the administration under [Executive Order 13986](#), Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.

National Academy studies:

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/foundation-for-assessing-the-health-and-vitality-of-the-nasa-science-mission-directorates-research-communities>

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/increasing-diversity-in-the-leadership-of-competed-space-missions>

SUMMARY

Thank you for your consideration and advice on the scope of the draft demographics information spreadsheet during this meeting.

- The agencies will finalize the spreadsheet scope and then work to fill it out in the coming months.
- The spreadsheet will be presented to the AAAC, which will then be charged to provide feedback and advice regarding the demographic efforts.



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