NATIONAL ACADEMIES Sciences Engineering Medicine

CENTER FOR ADVANCING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
AERONAUTICS, SPACE, AND ASTRONOMY PROGRAM AREA
SPACE STUDIES BOARD
AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ENGINEERING BOARD

Committee on Astrobiology and Planetary Sciences

Meeting No. 2 on Planetary Research Program Metrics

August 19, 2026

Virtual Meeting

ALL TIMES IN US EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME (UTC--4:00)

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2026

OPEN SESSION
Zoom Remote Access
Meeting ID: 000-0000-0000 | Password: 000000
Phone: 877-853-5257 (toll free)
Livestream: TBD

CLICK HERE TO JOIN

Discussion with NASA Planetary Science Division (NASA-PSD) on Task

12:00 PM	**Welcome**	**Dr. Marty Gilmore / Dr. Karyn Rogers, Committee Co-Chairs**
12:05 PM	**Discussion with NASA Planetary Research Program on Statement of Task** (30-minute presentation and 30-minute discussion)	**Dr. Kathleen Vander Kaaden, Director, Planetary Research Program, NASA-PSD**
1:05 PM	*Meeting Adjourns to Closed Session*	
1:15 PM	**Discussion of Topics and Issues Heard in Open Session**	
2:00 PM	*Meeting Adjourns*	

STATEMENT OF TASK

Task Initiated on July 15, 2026

The Committee on Astrobiology and Planetary Sciences (CAPS) of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine will prepare a short report to identify metrics by which the NASA Planetary Research Program can evaluate the health and effectiveness of its research and analysis program in accomplishing decadal science objectives.

The Committee will address the following questions:

- Is the most recent planetary science and astrobiology decadal survey, Origins, Worlds, and Life (OWL) recommended budget allocation of 10% of the NASA Planetary Science Division (NASA-PSD) to the Planetary Research Program adequate as a metric to describe a thriving scientific community?
- Beyond percentage-based budget allocation, are there other qualitative or quantitative metrics or indicators that can be used to measure the health of the planetary research program on the 1-year, 5-year, or 10-year timescale? These Potential metrics could include, but are not limited to:
  - proposal selection rates,
  - total number of investigators supported, or
  - funding balance between mission-specific funding and the core research program.
- What would a healthy, sustainable, and thriving planetary science research community look like when evaluated using these identified metrics and indicators?
- What communications strategies and best practices could be used to effectively convey these metrics, indicators, and outcomes to stakeholders in the science community?
- Would the health and vitality of the planetary research community be improved through targeted investments in areas such as:
  - new scientific capabilities and technology development
  - interdisciplinary research
  - high-risk/high-reward investigations, or
  - targeted research opportunities.

For the purposes of this evaluation, the committee should assume

- a baseline Planetary Research Program budget of $150 million annually. and
- incremental funding increases of $25 million up to a maximum program budget of $250 million annually.