



January 2021

A message from our Director

Dear Friends,

With the spring 2021 semester underway, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our newest faculty member, Assistant Professor [Molly Simon](#). Her expertise in planetary science, science education, and citizen science make her an excellent addition to our community. I hope you all will have a chance to meet her in person when we can all gather together again.

In addition, among some of our biggest announcements this month, are the

inaugural Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) awards that the school has given through our own program as well as grants received by the school's faculty and students through The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. These grants are designed to empower and foster grassroots efforts to create a more inclusive environment for all. Throughout the year, we hope to provide regular updates on these projects and future plans.

As always, our faculty and staff remain committed to supporting our students' successes whether it is remotely or in person. Our biggest priority continues to be to help everyone in our community be productive and stay connected while keeping everyone safe and healthy. Keep yourself informed with the latest updates from the University on the [COVID-19 webpage](#) and the regularly updated [COVID-19 FAQ page](#).

I hope you enjoy this latest edition of our School newsletter. For more information on our research, events, students, faculty, and alumni, we have included links to social media at the end of this newsletter. Please follow us, share and retweet.

Be well and keep safe,



Meenakshi (Mini) Wadhwa

Announcements

**Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)
seed grants awarded for 2021**



Undergraduate astrophysics major Bryanna Gutierrez-Coatney's award-winning School of Earth and Space Exploration JEDI grant proposal is an education initiative designed to build awareness of physics and Earth and space topics among students in Arizona's Title 1 schools. [Read more about the awarded proposal.](#)



Four teams from School of Earth and Space Exploration were awarded JEDI seed grants from the natural sciences division of The College. The selected projects represent initiatives of the JEDI framework, which seeks to support calls to action and appeals for social change and justice following the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020. [Read about the awarded projects and the students and faculty involved.](#)

National Academy of Sciences honors Wadhwa with J. Lawrence Smith Medal

The National Academy of Sciences has announced that school Director, Meenakshi Wadhwa, will be honored with the 2021 J. Lawrence Smith Medal for her extraordinary scientific achievements.



In their press release, the Academy stated that Wadhwa has deepened the world's understanding of the evolutionary history of the solar system through her significant contributions to the sciences of cosmochemistry, solar system chronology, meteoritics, and trace element geochemistry. [Read more](#)



ASU ETX team recognized nationally for innovative and effective student learning in virtual environments

The ASU Center for Education Through eXploration (ETX) team including researcher Chris Mead and ETX staff and faculty Geoffrey Bruce, Wendy Taylor, Steven Semken, and Ariel Anbar received the 2020 National Association of Geoscience Teachers Journal of Geoscience Education **Outstanding Paper Award** for a report describing their development and implementation of online immersive Virtual Field Trips (iVFTs). [Read more and learn about iVFTs.](#)

In the News



Understanding origins of Arizona's Sunset Crater eruption from 1,000 years ago

Research from professor and scientist Amanda Clarke and her team focuses on understanding the origins of Arizona's Sunset Crater eruption that took place 1,000 years ago. Such valuable lessons may provide a better understanding of threats from similar volcanoes around the world today. [Learn more](#)

At ASU, ecology embraces engineering to uncover mysteries of the desert

Desert ecologists have a hard job. Their efforts to understand the workings of the natural world have never been more urgent. ASU researchers, including school faculty Heather Throop and Jnaneshwar Das, are discovering that innovations in engineering and computer science can offer intriguing solutions to boost ecologists' efficiency and



help them find actionable environmental insights sooner. [Read more](#)



Geology rocks the past and the future

ASU's School of Earth and Space Exploration is entering its 15th year. The school is renowned as an interdisciplinary powerhouse, and geology is a big part of that. Take a look back at the unique development of the study of geology at ASU, from its start with a collection of meteorites to the work of the next generation of interdisciplinary scientists in a three-part series. [Learn more](#)

Lab of the Month

The Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter Camera (LROC) Science Operations Center is January's Lab of the Month. LROC is a system of three cameras mounted on the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter that capture high resolution black and white images and moderate resolution multi-spectral images of the lunar surface. [Watch principal investigator Mark Robinson explain the history and mission as LROC marks a decade of discovery.](#)



Events



Virtual Night Sky: Wednesday January 27 and February 10

Join the ASU Marston Exploration Theater presenters on **Wednesday January 27 and February 10, 2021 at 7 p.m.** for a live planetarium presentation. Learn about the planets and stars visible in the night sky from your own backyard and the latest events in space exploration! Register in advance for these FREE Zoom webinars [January 27](#) and [February 10](#).

Exploring Jupiter's Moon Europa: A Potentially Habitable World

Learn about NASA's Europa mission from its project scientist and ASU alumnus, [Dr. Robert Pappalardo](#). The live webinar, **Thursday February 4 at 6 p.m. MST**, will feature Pappalardo's account of the Europa Clipper mission's investigations for whether the icy moon could harbor conditions suitable for life. [Register for this free event.](#)



Save the date: Hope Orbiter Mars Orbit Insertion February 9, 2021

The Emirates Mars Mission is scheduled to enter Mars' orbit on February 9, 2021. The orbiter carries three science instruments including the Emirates Mars Infrared Spectrometer (EMIRS) developed by school professor and planetary scientist Philip Christensen in a partnership with the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre . [Visit Emirates Mars Mission to learn more.](#)

Save the date: Mars 2020 Landing February 18, 2021

NASA's [Mars Perseverance rover](#) makes its final descent to the Red Planet on February 18, 2021. While we love everything about this rover, we're especially proud of Mastcam-Z, the rover's advanced camera system, led by principal investigator and school professor, Jim Bell. We're planning a public watch party for this event, so visit our [events page](#) soon for details. NASA will also be streaming a [live landing broadcast](#) beginning at 12:15 p.m. MST.



Alumni Announcements

Alumni: Keep it current!

Join us on [LinkedIn](#) and [update your contact info](#) so you can receive the latest School and university news, exclusive career and professional development opportunities, unique ASU experiences, invitations to special events and much more!

ASU School of Earth and
Space Exploration
Arizona State University



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ASU ahead of MIT and Stanford
— U.S. News & World Report, 8 years, 2016–2021

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