

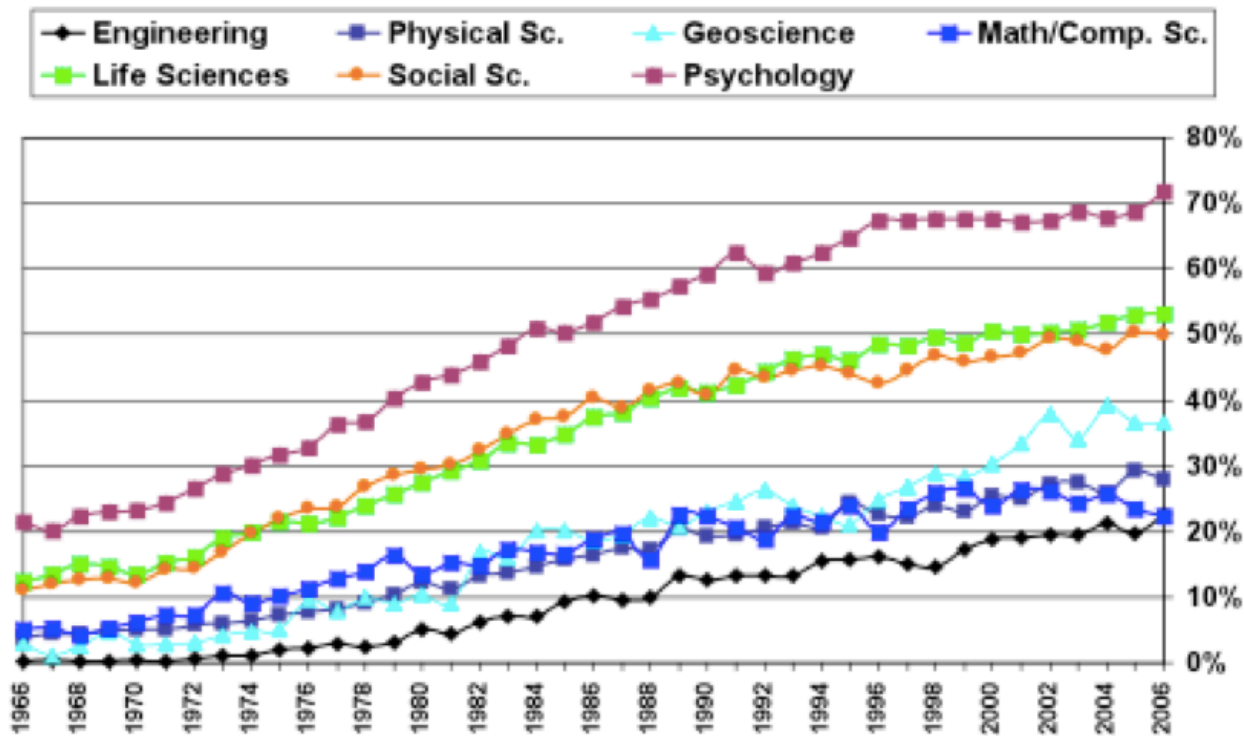
AAS Special Session: Family Leave Policies & Childcare for Graduate Students and Postdocs

David Charbonneau
Laura Trouille
&
The Committee on the Status of Women
in Astronomy

Keeping Women in the Science Pipeline, M. A. Mason, M. Goulden, K. Frasch (2011), *Ann. Amer. Acad. Pol. Soc. Sci.*, **638**, 141

Analyzed data from longitudinal *Survey of Doctoral Recipients* (NSF) 170,000 participants; has included questions about family since 1981

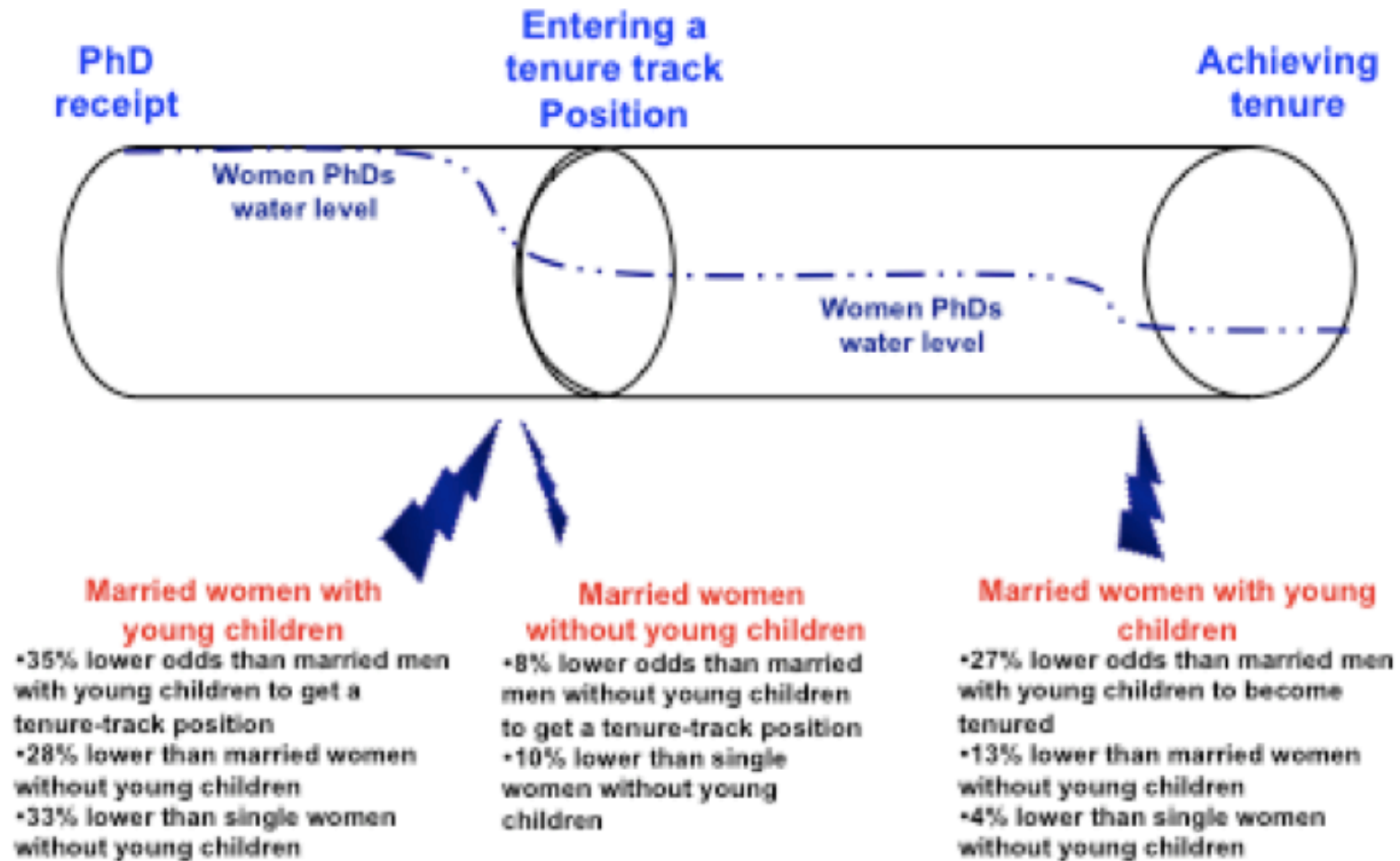
Women as a Percent of Doctoral Recipients in the United States (U.S. Citizens Only), Sciences, 1966-2006



Source: National Science Foundation (NSF), Survey of Earned Doctorates, retrieved from WebCaspar, 4/15/2009.²

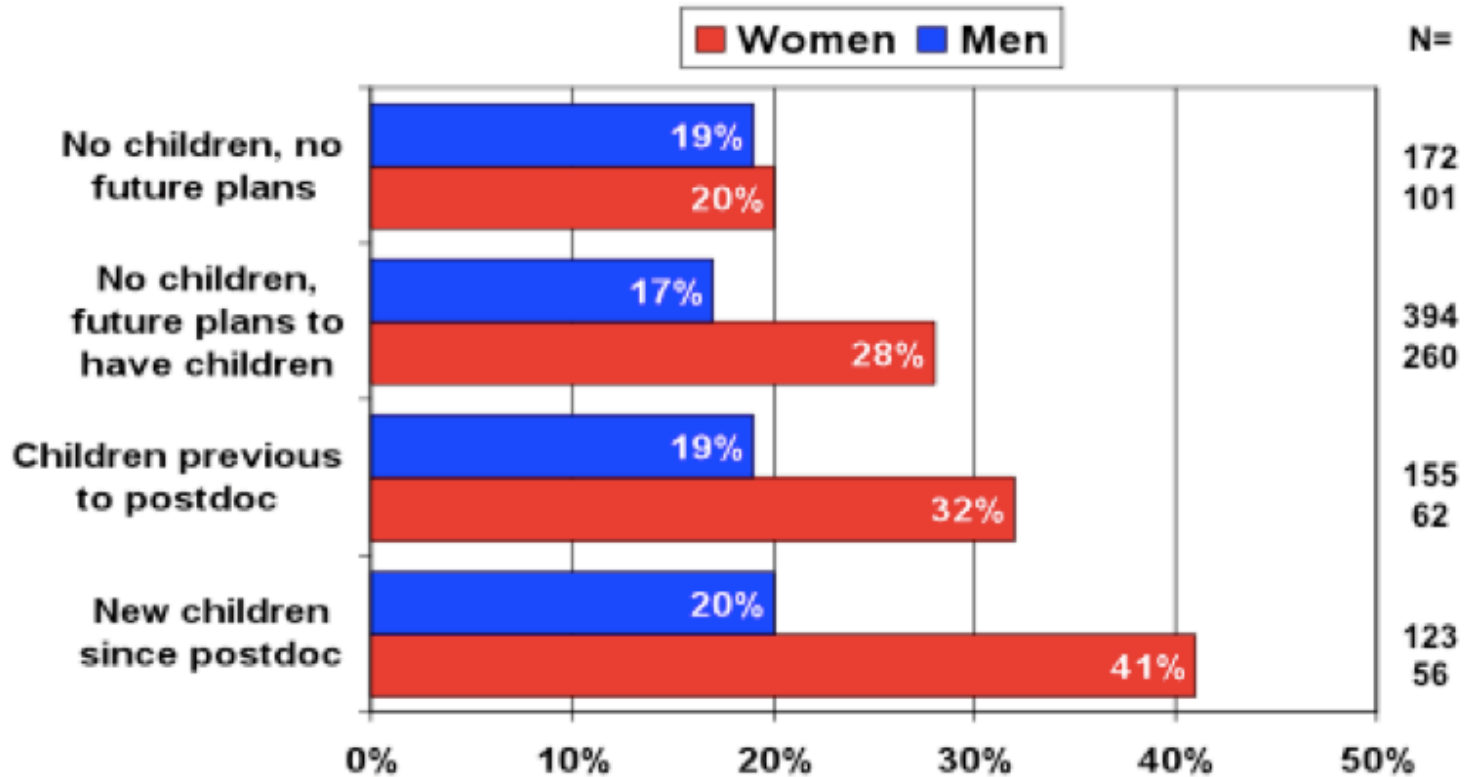
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Leaks in the Pipeline to Tenure for Women PhDs in the Sciences*



Keeping Women in the Science Pipeline, M. A. Mason, M. Goulden, K. Frasch (2011), *Ann. Amer. Acad. Pol. Soc. Sci.*, **638**, 141

Shifting Career Goal away from Professor with Research Emphasis: UC Postdoctoral Scholars, by Gender and Family Status/Future Plans



Percent of Postdocs with Professor with Research Emphasis Goal at Start Who Shifted Career Goal to Another by Time of Survey

Source: Mason, Mary Ann, Marc Goulden, and Karle Frasch. 2011. "UC Postdoctoral Career Life Survey." (<http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu/grad%20life%20survey.html>).

Keeping Women in the Science Pipeline, M. A. Mason, M. Goulden, K. Frasch
(2011), *Ann. Amer. Acad. Pol. Soc. Sci.*, **638**, 141

- PhD women with children 35% less likely than male counterparts to start position as assistant professor.
- Women who had children after becoming postdocs were twice as likely as their male counterparts to shift career goals away from professors with research emphasis.
- Women who were asst profs and had young children were 27% less likely than male counterparts to remain until tenure.
- Report concludes that **“family formation accounts for the largest leaks in the pipeline between the receipt of the PhD and the acquisition of tenure for women in the sciences.”**
- Report recommends more family friendly policies for graduate students and postdocs, and a clearer description of those policies.

A National Survey of Parental Leave and Childcare Policies for Graduates Students in Departments of Astronomy

All 28 US Departments of Astronomy that Grant the PhD

University of Arizona		Indiana University	
Boston University		University of Maryland	
University of California Berkeley		University of Massachusetts at Amherst	
University of California Santa Cruz		University of Michigan at Ann Arbor	
California Institute of Technology		University of Minnesota	
Case Western Reserve University		New Mexico State University	
University of Chicago		Ohio State University	
University of Colorado at Boulder		Pennsylvania State University	
Columbia University		Princeton University	
Cornell University		University of Texas at Austin	
University of Florida		University of Virginia	
Harvard University		University of Washington	
University of Hawaii		University of Wisconsin at Madison	
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign		Yale University	



HARVARD UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF ASTRONOMY

60 GARDEN STREET MS 16 CAMBRIDGE MA 02138

TEL 617 496 6515 FAX 617 495 7049

[DCHARBONNEAU@CFA.HARVARD.EDU](mailto:dcharbonneau@cfa.harvard.edu)

28 February 2012

Prof. Charles F. Gammie
Chair, Department of Astronomy
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Dear Prof. Gammie,

On behalf of the AAS Committee on the Status of Women in Astronomy, I am conducting a national survey of current policies regarding graduate student parental leave and childcare. I am contacting the chair of each department of astronomy and/or astrophysics that offers the degree of PhD. The list of institutions is provided on the attached sheet.

I would greatly appreciate if you could please provide a reply to this letter by **March 30th, 2012**. I understand the additional burden that this request will place upon you, but I believe a comprehensive survey of such policies has not been conducted and will be of broad interest to our community. I commit to providing you with a report of my findings. Please send your reply by email to me at dcharbonneau@cfa.harvard.edu.

I understand that in addition to formal policies, your department may have informal policies that you may or may not wish to describe in writing. While I would appreciate learning of these if at all possible, my questions below (with the exception of item 3) pertain only to formal and openly-declared policies that affect the graduate students in your department. In some cases this will be University-wide, and in others they will be specific to your department.



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Kudos!
First to send
in response.

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Questions Posed by the Survey

1. Are graduate students in your department eligible for leave following the birth or adoption of a child? In particular, please specify:

- i. who is eligible, i.e. mothers or primary caregiver or both parents (and whether this includes domestic partners), and whether leave is available in the case of adoption,
- ii. the duration of leave, and what fraction is paid and unpaid, and any specifics of the level of paid leave, including whether the level of pay is sufficient to meet visa requirements for international students,
- iii. whether students retain access to university benefits, notably health care and student housing, during the time of leave,
- iv. whether time taken as leave counts toward degree completion (i.e. the graduate student clock),
- v. whether these policies are University-wide, or specific to your department, and,
- vi. in the case of paid leave, how this leave is funded.

Questions Posed by the Survey

2. Are graduate students in your department eligible for childcare benefits? In particular, please specify:
 - i. who is eligible, i.e. mothers or primary caregiver or both parents (and whether this includes domestic partners), and whether childcare is available in the case of adoption,
 - ii. what are the childcare benefits (such as scholarships or discounts on fees or privileged access to childcare facilities) and what are the duration of these benefits, and,
 - iii. in the case of financial assistance, how this is funded.

3. Does your department have informal policies for parental leave and/or childcare? You might simply reply yes or no, but I would appreciate any details of these policies and how they are implemented, to the extent you wish to share this information.

4. How are graduate students informed of whatever formal and/or informal policies are available to them (e.g. University-wide graduate student handbook, Departmental website, informal discussion between faculty and students, etc)? Please list any websites where these policies are described.

Response Rate:

Response Rate:

100%

Thank you to the Chairs, Directors of Graduate Students, and/or Administrators who prepared the responses.

Overview of Results

16 of 28 (57%) of Departments offer paid leave ranging from 2 – 12 weeks

Arizona: 6 weeks for primary caregiver

UC Berkeley: 6 weeks for birth mothers

UC Santa Cruz: 6 weeks for birth mothers, 2 weeks for others (TA)

Caltech: 6 weeks for birth mothers

Columbia: 8 weeks for birth mothers, 4 weeks for others

Cornell: 6 weeks per child per parent or 1 yr reduced load status

Illinois Urbana-Champaign: 2 weeks + up to 4 more weeks from sick leave

Maryland: 6 weeks for parents

Michigan: 6 weeks for parents

Minnesota: 6 weeks for birth mother, 2 weeks for father or adoptive mother

Ohio State: 6 weeks for mothers, 3 weeks for fathers*

Pennsylvania State: 6 weeks for parents

Princeton: 12 weeks for birth mothers

Wisconsin-Madison: 12 weeks for parents

Yale: full semester (8 + 8 weeks) for parents

Simplest University Wide Policy: Yale

Parental Support and Relief

Registered Ph.D. students who wish to modify their academic responsibilities because of the birth or adoption of a child may request parental support and relief during or following the term in which the birth or adoption occurs. For the whole of the term in which the support and relief are requested, the student's academic clock stops, effectively adding an additional term to the total time to degree. During this period, students remain registered, receive the full financial aid package as specified in their letter of admission, and will have departmental academic expectations modified to best suit the specific situation. The precise nature of the academic responsibilities undertaken or suspended during this period should be a matter of consultation among the adviser, the student, and the Graduate School, with the understanding that students are entitled to full relief for at least an eight-week period. Students who take only eight weeks of relief during the term in which, or just after, a birth or adoption occurs may receive an additional eight weeks of stipend funded by the Graduate School in a later term. Parental relief may not be combined with other funding. To arrange for parental relief, a student should contact the appropriate associate dean four months prior to the birth or adoption.



University of Wisconsin-Madison

Department of Astronomy

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Grad

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→ **Medical and
Family Leave
Policy**

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Medical and Family Leave Policy



This policy shall provide all Astronomy Department Research Assistants (RAs) with

- up to twelve weeks of leave in case of serious illness or disability affecting the RA or his/her dependent and
- up to twelve weeks of parental leave.

While on leave, RAs shall retain health insurance benefits. On return from leave, RAs shall be entitled to be restored to the position held by the RA when the leave commenced or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other conditions of employment.

Overview of Results

5 of 28 (18%) of Departments offer retention of some or all benefits but no paid leave

Florida: 12 weeks

U. Massachusetts Amherst: 12 weeks

New Mexico State University: 12 weeks

U. Texas Austin: 12 weeks

U. Washington: 1 semester*

Overview of Results

4 of 28 (14%) of Departments have a policy
but no benefits are retained (i.e. Leave)

Case Western Reserve University

U. Chicago

U. Hawaii

U. Virginia

3 of 28 (11%) Departments have no policy

Boston U.

U. Colorado Boulder

Harvard U.

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Note: Mothers receive paid leave through discretionary funds, but this is an informal policy.

Who is paying for it?

- Nearly all universities that offered paid leave stated that if the grant agency permits, then funding shall come from that agency, but university will back stop it.
- In most cases there is a pool of funding set aside by the university (specifically the graduate school) to cover this, but in one case (U Wisconsin Madison) this is done at departmental level. Informal policies (such as Harvard) are handled by departmental discretionary funds.
- Penn State is an interesting case: Policy states that 6 weeks paid leave is the responsibility of the departments, but there were no funds set aside for this. Department was told by University that NSF funds could not be used for this.

Who is Included?

Of the 21/28 (75%) of Departments that offer paid leave and/or retention of benefits:

12 of 21 (57%) specifically include domestic partnerships; the others refer only to mothers, fathers, and/or parents so may as well.

19 of 21 (91%) include adoption

Childcare

- 16 of 28 (57%) offer benefits that include financial subsidies or reduced tuition; most of these were modest but several (including Michigan, Minnesota, Princeton) were in excess of \$3000.
- 6 of 28 (21%) offer privileged access to childcare facilities
- 6 of 28 (21%) have no specific benefit
- Lists of institutions offering a childcare benefit is not the same as those offering a leave policy.

Survey of Postdoc Leave Policies by Laura Trouille (Northwestern) and Nick Murphy (CfA)



Postdoc Family Leave Policies



- The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for eligible employees.
- Postdoctoral fellows are often not covered by the FMLA if not considered employees.
- CA, HI NJ, NY, RI, and PR require employers to provide Short Term Disability coverage (~50-60% salary for ~5-26 weeks).
- Generally, accrued sick/vacation can be used (except for postdocs who do not accrue leave).
- 15/20 have some form of paid maternity leave, while 6/20 have paid paternity leave.
- 10/20 include adoption in paid leave. 6/20 specifically include domestic partners in paid leave benefits.
- More information on our Astrobetter Family Leave Wiki: <http://www.astrobetter.com/wiki/tiki-index.php?page=Leave+Policies>

M = Maternity, P = Paternity

University	Paid Leave	# of weeks paid leave	Includes adoption?	Specifically includes domestic partners?	Retain University benefits?	Eligibility Notes
Case Western	Yes	M: 6 P: 3	Yes	Yes	Yes	All eligible
Columbia	M: Yes P: No	M: 6-8 (but req. doctor certificate)	No. Can take unpaid leave	Yes	Yes to medical & retirement, but with caveats	Externally funded follow funder's rules
Cornell	M: Yes P: No	M: 8	Yes	No	Yes	Externally funded follow funder's rules
MIT	M: Yes P: No	M: 8	Yes	Yes	Yes to medical, No to retirement	Externally funded follow funder's rules
Northwestern	M: Yes P: No	M: 6	No. Can take unpaid leave	No	Yes	All eligible
Princeton	M: Yes P: No	M: 6	No. Can take unpaid leave	No	Yes	Externally funded follow funder's rules
Rice	M: Yes P: No	M: 6-8 (Short Term Disability at 80% salary)	No. Can take unpaid leave	No	Yes	Must have completed 1 year of employment
UC-Berkeley	M: Yes P: No	M: 5 (Short Term Disability at 55% salary)	No. Can take unpaid leave	Yes	Yes	Participation in CA disability insurance program

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Conclusions and Role of Upcoming Speakers

- The current policies for parental leave and childcare for graduate students and postdocs vary enormously between institutions.
- We are in a time of rapid policy change.
- A majority of departments of astronomy offer paid leave and modest childcare subsidies to their graduate students.
- U. Wisconsin Madison is a model for a solution at the departmental, rather than university level.
- At most universities, policies are difficult to decipher and Chairs/DGS' did not know details
- Speakers:
 - Natalie Gosnell and Bob Mathieu (U. Wisconsin)
 - Ed Ajhar (NSF)
 - Chas Beichman (NASA)
 - David Helfand (AAS President)

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