

# Exoplanet Explorers (ExoExplorers) Science Series

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# Motivation and Inception

- **Visibility:** The COVID-19 pandemic has limited opportunities for early career scientists to promote their work and interface with the larger community. Aim to create an internal and external network for early career scientists.
- **Inclusion:** We want to amplify early career scientists, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOCs).
- **Science:** Use the framework of the ExEP Science Gap List to serve as a touchstone for science talks.

**The first ExoExplorers cohort is wrapping up—how did we do?**

# ExoExplorers 2021 cohort

David Coria  
(Univ. of Kansas)



Rachel Fernandes  
(Univ. of Arizona)



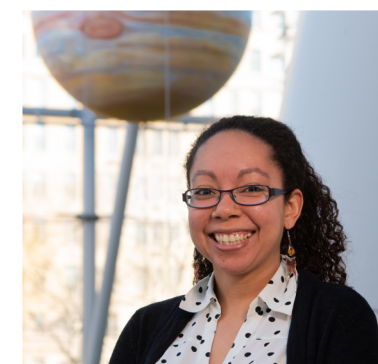
Jules Fowler  
(UCSC)



Amy Glazier  
(UNC Chapel Hill)



Eileen Gonzales  
(Cornell)



Samson Johnson  
(Ohio State)



Caprice Phillips  
(Ohio State)



Kaitlin Rasmussen  
(Univ. of Michigan)



Quang Tran  
(UT Austin)



Jason Williams  
(USC/Carnegie)





# Events and Activities

- **ExoExplorer talks:** Feb-Jun 2021
  - All of these are posted online!
- **1-1 meetings with prominent scientists**
  - Speakers solicited ~5 names of folks they'd like to meet with, OC coordinated meetings
- **ExoGuide talks:** Jan-April 2021
  - All of these are posted online!
- **Professional Development workshops**
  - **Building Inclusive Collaborations** (May 2021), Stefanie Johnson (CU Boulder)
  - **Proposal Writing workshop** (June 2021), Christina Richey (JPL)
- **Meet-and-Greet with NASA HQ reps Doug Hudgins and Hannah Jang-Condell** (May 2021)
- **Regular coffee and social hours for the cohort**

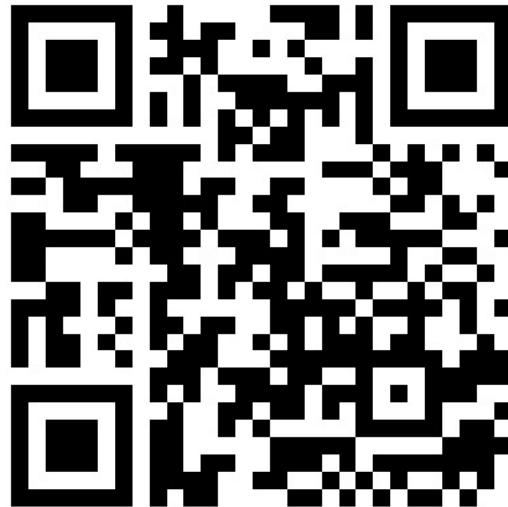
# Metrics



- Within cohort
  - We sent an **anonymous survey** to each ExoExplorer at the start of the program to conduct self assessment, solicit their goals, and poll their interests for professional development
    - We will be sending the cohort another survey at the end of the program to allow them to re-evaluate and provide feedback on program activities
    - This survey included assessment of their mentoring network (<https://mirjamglessmer.com/2018/08/22/taking-ownership-of-your-own-mentoring/>)
- Within exoplanet community
  - Attendance count for each set of ExoExplorer talks
  - NExSci tweet tracking
    - **8,000-50,000 Impressions** (Total # of times tweets were displayed/delivered in timeline or search result)
    - **50-500 Total Engagements** (media engagements, detail expands, likes, retweets, link clicks, profile clicks)

# Soliciting broader community feedback

- Anonymous feedback form
  - <https://forms.gle/DQ3er5bZnaPYhRhz8>



All feedback is welcome!

# Planning for the next cohort

- Planning for Jan 2022 start date
  - Call released in ~August, due in ~Sept, selections in Nov
- Will include in-person component!
- We're looking for the next round of **ExoGuides!**
  - <https://forms.gle/zUUUsGTCEhei1jWjY8>



# Thank you



- Thank you to ExEP (especially Gary Blackwood, David Ciardi, Eric Mamajek, Ray Lemus, Rebecca Gonzalez), ExoPAG, Doug Hudgins and Hannah Jang-Condell for their support
- Thanks to the SC and OC for their hard work in getting this off the ground
- And thanks to all of you for your attendance and participation!

Any questions? Email [exoexplorers\\_questions@jpl.nasa.gov](mailto:exoexplorers_questions@jpl.nasa.gov)

**Sign up for ExoExplorers announcements here:**  
<https://exoplanets.nasa.gov/exep/exopag/exoexplorers/exoexplorers-announcements/>



# ExoExplorers Steering Committee and Organizing Committee

## Steering Committee (SC)

Tiffany Kataria



Jessie Christiansen



Natasha Batalha



Joshua Pepper



## Organizing Committee (OC)

Vanessa Bailey



Jennifer Burt



Marie Ygouf



Robert Zellem



# ExoGuides



Ian Crossfield (Univ. of Kansas)



Vikki Meadows (Univ. of Washington)



Courtney Dressing (UC Berkeley)



Knicole Colón (GSFC)



# Lessons learned



- *Broader community advertising*
  - Most applicants came from the big astro/exo institutions
  - Are there graduate/postdoc exo communities we aren't reaching?
- *Big applicant pool!*
  - Our choice of 10 cohort members for the pilot was based off of schedule and scope.
  - With 65 applicants this first round, we should consider expanding in the near future.
- Ultimately, this is our first time doing this, so we are bound to learn a lot from the application process, but also from our cohort!



# Emphasis on the “how”

- Aimed for broad recruitment and advertisement, call for applications vetted with inclusive language
- Encourage technology that enables science
- Incentivize the program, draw big names; make it worth their while
- Include compensation for talks
- Create a Slack workspace for interaction
- Create an ‘SC’ and ‘OC’ to implement the program. The ‘SC’ consists of members of the ExoPAG EC that will set the scope of the speaker series and decide on the applications. The ‘OC’ consists of ExEP team to coordinate logistics.
- There are some models for programs like these out there—what elements work best in this framework? How can we work to make this inclusive?



# ExoExplorers Program Scope

- **Speaker series:**
  - ExoExplorers deliver science talks inspired by topics in the Science Gap List
    - Monthly science talks given by two Cohort members (two half-hour talks)
- **Professional development:**
  - Interface between cohort and **ExoGuides**
    - ExoGuides: Prominent exoplanet scientists that give a one-hour talk to the cohort that speaks to their experiences as a scientist. Also speak with cohort in at least one roundtable discussion
  - Participate in professional development seminars; for example
    - Improv workshop
    - How to make a competitive scientist (e.g., how to write a compelling CV, how to give a good talk)
    - Fireside chats with prominent exoplanet scientists
    - Talks on non-academic career paths
  - These seminars will be decided on by the cohort
- **Building an internal network:**
  - Weekly 'lunches' or social hours within cohort (whatever they decide, really!)
  - Slack workspace for regular interaction
  - Create a space for the cohort to mutually share and critique their own related documents: first papers, conference presentations, CVs, fellowship applications, etc.

# ExoExplorers development and application process

An illustration of an exoexplorer in a desert landscape. The explorer is wearing a blue suit and a yellow helmet, standing on a reddish-brown ground. In the background, there are purple and blue mountains under a yellow sky. A yellow line on the ground suggests a path or a boundary.

- SC and OC have met weekly since ~July 2020 to formulate this program
  - Each of us brought our own unique perspectives and ideas
- 65 total applicants!
- Call for Applications released Oct 5, due Nov 5, cohort notified Dec 17
- Advertised on social media, individual research contacts, professional exoplanet listservs
- Many were strong applicants, and brought many valuable ideas and perspectives
- Applications were evaluated on three criteria: science, DEIA experience / leadership potential, and cohort participation ideas