



IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Space Science Institute Board Appoints New Executive Director

DENVER, CO - The Space Science Institute (SSI) Board of Directors announced today the appointment of Karly M. Pitman, Ph.D., a leader in laboratory astrophysics and planetary science, to the position of Executive Director / Senior Research Scientist for SSI. Dr. Pitman will serve as the organization's second executive director, succeeding founder Dr. Paul Dusenbery and interim director Dr. Michael Wolff. She assumes her position on February 23, 2015 and will be based at SSI's national headquarters in Boulder, Colorado.

"We are thrilled to have found a person of Dr. Pitman's talent, expertise and vision to lead SSI," said Dr. William Purcell, chair of the board of directors. "Her impressive history in this industry, as well as our organization, will help propel SSI's ongoing space science research and STEM education initiatives into the future."

Dr. Pitman comes to SSI from the Planetary Science Institute in Tucson, AZ where she served as a research scientist. Previously she worked at Washington University – St. Louis in the Department of Earth & Planetary Sciences, as a NASA Postdoctoral Program fellow and affiliate contractor at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, and as a graduate research assistant at SSI where her career began. Dr. Pitman's technical areas of expertise include computational radiative transfer modeling, remote sensing and hyperspectral analysis, and spectroscopy and refractive index determination at ultraviolet to far-infrared wavelengths. She specializes in interpreting surface and atmospheric spectral signatures for Mars, outer Solar System moons, and asteroids and in performing laboratory astrophysics experiments to infer the makeup of interstellar dust in support of NASA and NSF. She holds a Ph.D. in Physics from Louisiana State University and an A.B. in Astronomy and Geology from Vassar College.

Dr. Pitman has an active leadership and service record in the American Astronomical Society, the American Geophysical Union, and the American Physical Society, with a focus on professional development, demographics, and the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) employment pipeline. She is a featured scientist on the NASA Solar System Exploration website (<http://solarsystem.nasa.gov>), the 51 Women in Planetary Science project, and the American Physical Society Women Speaker's Program, and serves as a scientific consultant for children's books and K-24 STEM curriculum materials.

“Having worked in the nonprofit research sector for much of my career, I hope to be a strong voice for what SSI offers to researchers and its stakeholders. What’s special about SSI is that it couples a unique business model that fosters space, earth, and planetary science research with high-class education and outreach programs that translate those discoveries for the public. It is an honor to be able to give back to an organization that has been part of my career development, and I look forward to charting the future course of SSI with the board and employees,” said Dr. Pitman.

About SSI:

The Space Science Institute (SSI) is a nonprofit, public benefit 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 1992. SSI has five major branches: Research, Cassini Flight Operations, and National Center for Interactive Learning, Business Operations, and Information Systems and Technology (IST). SSI is on the leading edge of creating new, affordable, efficient, and far-reaching models for earth and space science research and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education. In the coming years, our potential to make science accessible to large numbers of people, including underserved communities, is enormous. The key to our approach is that we offer the full continuum of discovery and education – we conduct world-class scientific research and we make it accessible to a broad population. Humans are driven to explore. We are inspired by fundamental questions: Are we alone? Could we live on other planets? How does our amazing planet work? Few things capture our imaginations more than the mysteries of space and the wonders of our own planet. Society benefits from the pursuit of new knowledge: the search for life beyond Earth begins with understanding how our own planet works. The excitement of earth and space science offers a compelling hook for engaging the public in science and inspiring a new generation of innovators.