

Transcending Societal Issues for Space Exploration (12)
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Author: Mr. Aaron Oesterle
United States, ferris.valyn@gmail.com

Mr. Rick Tumlinson
United States, Rick@EarthLightFoundation.org
Mr. Karlton Johnson
National Space Society, United States, Karlton.Johnson@nss.org

A POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR A BETTER SPACE PROGRAM

Abstract

A major challenge facing space programs is a compelling value proposition. Indeed, even at the height of the Apollo Moon Program, there were people asking “What is the value proposition of “space” for me? For my constituents? My company? Etc?” For many people, space is a luxury for wealthy individuals or wealthier nations. This is an on-going problem when developing space policy – it fails to address the strategic societal problems. Given the various national and international issues facing countries and society today, this is a recipe that is dangerous when it comes to gaining broad and deep support for space programs. However, if one were to change the conversation to align space and leverage it to solve just a few salient everyday problems here on Earth, then the value proposition speaks for itself. It’s time for a rethinking of our approach to this conversation and to start changing the narrative.

To address this opportunity our group envisioned and crafted a framework for developing space policy that considers strategic societal problems. Then we determined which policies would need attenuation to support this idea. By identifying specific principles that are universal in nature, and could speak to large groups of people; we leveraged that to extrapolate broad but measurable goals tied specifically to answering the universal Maslow principle “what’s in it for me” in terms of what space can do for a targeted audience. Along with this, we defined a series of specific actions the U.S. government could take, based on our principles and goals to reshape the narrative and communicate a space-related value proposition worth hearing.

Adoption of this framework, or one like it, will be vital to strengthening space policy and extending its influence to reach beyond the current limited stakeholders’ base. When successful, a new marketplace of advocates and constituents will open up. These advocates will help influence governmental, public, and private sector support for key space programs of interest.