Dear VEXAG Community:

The Venus STDT (Science and Technology Study Team) has been formed under the chairmanship of Mark Bullock, and begun its work on a Venus flagship mission study. This is huge progress for the Venus community—this study will not only move us closer to a Venus flagship mission, but it will also hopefully highlight technology investments that will aid Venus missions in all cost categories. Community input into the STDT study will happen at the next VEXAG meeting, which is scheduled for May 7-8, 2008 in Greenbelt, MD.

In addition to the constant flow of exciting data from Venus Express and from the MESSENGER flyby, we are also making progress in new opportunities for Venus research. Watch the VEXAG website for information on the research focus ‘Venus-Earth Connections’, which was a major topic of discussion at the last VEXAG meeting. Also watch for a new mission of opportunity announcement ‘Stand Alone Mission of Opportunity Notice (SALMON)’, under which one can propose to utilize Venus and Earth data already available and/or from missions now in orbit. SALMON is tentatively scheduled to be released May, 2008. And of course, there are already opportunities to propose Venus research under the existing ROSES research calls, with a new option for 4-year proposals.

I urge the community to visit the VEXAG website to learn more about the STDT, and to access the White Paper ‘Venus Exploration Goals, Objectives, Investigations and Priorities: 2007’. This is a living document, particularly the Goals, Objectives, and Investigations sections. At the next VEXAG meeting, we will discuss updates to this document.

With the results from recent missions, the upcoming Venus Climate Orbiter mission, and the onset of the Venus STDT study, we have a really positive trend for Venus research and exploration. We await the NOSSE report and the New Frontiers call later this year, to better understand opportunities for future New Frontiers Venus missions. In addition, a one-week course for mission Principal Investigator training was described in the PEN newsletter of January 13, 2008; NASA by mid January will make available to the community the Large Mission (i.e., New Frontiers, etc.) PI Qualification Questionnaire in preparation for the NF Announcement of Opportunity. Keep an eye on the VEXAG web side [http://www.lpi.usra.edu/vexag/](http://www.lpi.usra.edu/vexag/) for more news!

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