



Universities Space Research Association

MEDIA ADVISORY

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USRA Hosts Symposium on “The SmallSat Revolution: Doing More with Less” March 26, 2020 in Washington DC

Requests for Press Credentials Now Being Accepted

COLUMBIA, Md. – March 2, 2020. The Universities Space Research Association (USRA) invites members of media to attend its annual symposium, *“The SmallSat Revolution: Doing More with Less,”* on **Thursday, March 26, 2020**, at the Hilton National Mall, L’Enfant Plaza SW, Washington, D.C. The Symposium is being held in partnership with the Space Policy Institute of The George Washington University.

Media interested in attending should **RSVP by March 13th** to sfarukhi@usra.edu.

The half-day symposium, scheduled from 12 Noon - 5:00 pm EDT, on March 26, 2020 will bring together prominent business, government and academic leaders to discuss what has led to the SmallSat revolution and where we are headed. Time will be made available for questions.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Thomas Zurbuchen, Associate Administrator for NASA’s Science Mission Directorate.

Panel 1: Nurturing the SmallSat Revolution—University Research and Entrepreneurial Ventures

Panelists: James W. Cutler, University of Michigan; Michael A. Keidar, George Washington University; Jeffrey Manber, President, NANORACKS

Small satellites, often built in simple university laboratories by graduate students under the supervision of senior faculty were envisioned as relatively inexpensive ways to develop a hands-on educational experience. The success of these satellites and the ability to launch them inexpensively as well (using “extra” space on larger launch vehicles) demonstrated the probability of their exceptional capability being used in many ways. Combining advanced micro technologies with shorter lifetimes than traditional satellites became attractive to entrepreneurs and to venture funding sources. Today, a vast new industry and era is approaching that encompasses everything from simple university experiments to mega-constellations employing small satellites in ways never before possible. This panel will explore the history, recent developments, and future visions of the research potential for SmallSats as well as the growing university-business relationships that emerge from these experiments.

Panel 2: The Attraction of SmallSats—Civil, Defense, and Commercial Applications

Panelists: Jed Hancock, Space Dynamics Laboratory, Civil Space, Utah State University; Patricia Cooper, SpaceX (invited); Steven Nixon, SmallSat Alliance

Traditional large scientific, telecommunications, earth observation, weather, and other satellites have all of the characteristics that make space exclusive, expensive, risky and essentially the province of government programs and missions. Smallsats, and in particular, constellations of smallsats, overcome many of the barriers to entry into space business. And, although yet not fully proven, they offer the prospect of taking the place of larger satellites and providing both complementary and competitive services. The attraction is obvious, and the industry is growing rapidly. However, they do present new issues to the space environment that include shorter lifetimes, crowded orbits, increased space debris, and other unwanted interference. This panel will explore both the new opportunities and the risks involved with the rapid and as yet somewhat uncontrolled and uncoordinated smallsat systems being proposed and placed in orbit.

Speakers: Symposium Speakers will be announced at a later date.

Reception

Beginning at 4:45 pm EDT, a reception celebrating USRA will follow for all attendees (including media)

Media Coverage

All sessions will be on-the-record and may be video- or audio-recorded by accredited journalists, provided symposium proceedings are not disrupted. A press room and mult-box will be available on-site. Interviews may be conducted after all sessions conclude at the speakers' individual discretion.

Follow the conversation on Twitter using [#USRAedu](https://twitter.com/USRAedu), or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/USRAedu.

Media Credentials, Inquiries

All media should register for a badge to attend symposium sessions and the reception. Reporters, producers and photojournalists with valid media credentials are encouraged to pre-register via email with their name, news affiliation, title and phone number to Suraiya Farukhi (sfarukhi@usra.edu; (410) 740-6224) by 5:00 pm Friday, March 13, 2020. All media requests received after this deadline will be handled onsite at the symposium on Thursday, March 26. Both pre-registered and onsite registrants are required to provide a business card, press pass or equivalent identification at the media registration desk the day of the symposium. **Registration for press is complimentary.**

USRA Background

In 1969, at the request of NASA and other federal policymakers, NASA established USRA as an independent, nonprofit bridge for scholars and scientists to study samples of lunar rock and soil collected by Apollo astronauts. Now – 50 years later – USRA's mission encompasses far broader space- and aeronautics-related sciences exploration through leading-edge research, technology and education programs; space and aeronautics policy formation; and the operation and management of world-class facilities and initiatives through a consortium of 110 universities, the private sector and federal and foreign governments.

USRA's contributions over a half century touch nearly every aspect of space science, research and development and education – from biomedicine and astrophysics to space technology, facility management and operations, and education. By partnering with NASA, academic institutions worldwide, and industry, USRA has enabled the

study of the universe from airborne, ground-based and orbiting observatories as well as from space-based platforms. Its scientists and engineers have helped develop advanced technologies for complex spacecraft and human exploration into deep space. USRA's operation of the Lunar and Planetary Institute and the Quantum Artificial Intelligence Laboratory with NASA and Google is also producing some of the most important discoveries of our time. USRA's workforce development initiatives impact the entire education spectrum – from K-12 STEM and student internship programs at federal laboratories and USRA facilities to the management of NASA's postdoctoral program.

More information about USRA and this symposium are available at newsroom.usra.edu

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