

PAGs Joint Statement on the Probe-class Mission Charge

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The COPAG, ExoPAG, and PhysPAG agree that NASA should support the development of a probe class of competed missions for the Decadal survey. All three PAGs strongly support the first option proposed by Paul Hertz in his formal charge to the PAGs of January 14, 2016. Based on the input the three communities have received, there exists a wide range of community science goals that are both consistent with current National Academy priorities and that can be enabled with medium-class missions. The three PAGs also note that the work of preparing high quality white paper proposals to the 2020 Decadal Survey, for missions of this class, cannot be performed absent funding. In particular, all three PAGs agree that competed NASA HQ funds should allow at least 10 concepts for probe-class missions to be studied in some depth. However, the main concern associated with this first option is that limiting the funds available for each concept study to ~\$100K will likely severely limit the veracity of the CATE analyses at this early phase, even though funds would be provided for more detailed CATE analyses when requested at a later phase by the Decadal Survey committee. We recommend that APD consider apportioning sufficient funds to carry out multiple CATE analyses that would apply to the general category of probe missions in advance of the Decadal Survey.