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Oregon Students Awarded Top Honors in Solar System Research Competition

Houston, TX—May 12, 2021. A team of students from St. Mary's School in Medford, OR, earned top honors in the Exploration of the Moon and Asteroids by Secondary Students (ExMASS) national research program managed by the Center for Lunar Science and Exploration (CLSE), a joint effort between the Lunar and Planetary Institute and NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

A panel of planetary scientists selected the winning St. Mary's students from seven teams. The winning project, titled "Evidence for water on Vesta: Comparing the geomorphology of debris flows in craters on Earth, Mars, the Moon, and Vesta," concluded that several craters on Vesta contain debris flows formed in combination with a liquid.

Over the course of the academic year, teams of students from 10 high schools across the country conducted their research project with guidance from a scientist advisor. St. Mary's School students will present their research virtually at the joint NASA Exploration Science Forum (ESF)/European Lunar Symposium on July 20–23, 2021. The winning team includes Dylan Daneman, Cheng "Steven" Huang, Audrey Mills, John Shaughnessy, Zyris Zacha, and former teacher Holly Bensel. The team's advisor was Dr. Ryan Watkins from NASA Headquarters.

Instead of traveling to NASA Ames Research Center, the school will receive a lunar meteorite touch sample and each student and the teacher will receive a copy of the book *The Value of the Moon* by Paul D. Spudis.

The ExMASS program provides students an opportunity to conduct authentic, data-rich, scientific research of the Moon and asteroids, which covers the breadth of NASA Solar System Exploration Research Virtual Institute (SSERVI) science and exploration goals.

Over 200 students from 22 states participated in the ExMASS program between 2014–2018, producing 16 student poster presentations displayed at the SSERVI ESF. Of the 16 poster presentations, five received awards or honorable mentions in the ESF Student Poster Competition held each year.

About USRA

Founded in 1969, under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences at the request of the U.S. Government, the Universities Space Research Association (USRA) is a nonprofit corporation chartered to advance space-related science, technology and engineering. USRA operates scientific institutes and facilities, and conducts other major research and educational programs, under Federal funding. USRA engages the university community and employs

in-house scientific leadership, innovative research and development, and project management expertise. More information about USRA is available at www.usra.edu.

About LPI

The Lunar and Planetary Institute (LPI), operated by Universities Space Research Association, was established during the Apollo program to foster international collaboration and to serve as a repository for information gathered during the early years of the space program. Today, the LPI is an intellectual leader in lunar and planetary science. The Institute serves as a scientific forum attracting world-class visiting scientists, postdoctoral fellows, students, and resident experts; supports and serves the research community through newsletters, meetings, and other activities; collects and disseminates planetary data while facilitating the community's access to NASA science; and engages and excites, and educates the public about space science and invests in the development of future generations of explorers. The research carried out at the LPI supports NASA's efforts to explore the solar system. More information about LPI is available at www.lpi.usra.edu.

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