National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001

Reply to Attn of: S

March 14, 2001

Dear Colleague,

During the restructuring of the Mars Exploration Program this past summer, the science community strongly endorsed the addition of competitively-selected science missions to complement the baseline core series of missions. As a result, the program has established the Mars Scout missions to provide for innovative, rapid-response investigations. Selected Mars Scout investigations will be led by a Principal Investigator and will be comprised of scientists in partnerships involving (potentially) NASA Centers, academia, and industry. These teams will pursue missions of high scientific value utilizing observation platforms of their choice and design, including orbiters, aerobots, airplanes, landers and rovers.

Depending on the budget process now underway between the new administration and Congress, the first mission could be launched as early as the 2007 opportunity. An Announcement of Opportunity (AO) for the first Mars Scout mission is expected to be released in early 2002. Mars Scouts will be cost-capped at approximately $300M, including launch vehicle and mission operations and data analysis. The final cost-cap amount will be defined in the AO.

To support the plans of the Mars Program Director's Office at NASA Headquarters for technology development and program asset allocation for this first mission, six to ten promising mission concepts will be selected for initial intensive study. These concepts will be selected for funding, at the level of approximately $100K - 150K, through a review process involving brief written and verbal presentations at a workshop to be held on May 22-24, 2001 in Pasadena, California. Following a period of study lasting six months, a report on the results of the concept studies will be made by the funded investigators. These reports will be made in confidence to the Mars Program Director's Office at NASA HQ. The results of the concept studies will contribute to the development of the AO. Participation or non-participation in the concept studies will not prejudice the selection of missions for flight.

Participation in the Mars Scout Workshop will be limited to those interested in proposing for study funds. A Notice of Intent to propose is required with a maximum seven-page abstract describing the Mars Scout concept and a plan for the mission study. The Notice of Intent is due on or before April 9, 2001. The concept abstracts are due on or before May 1, 2001. It is the intent of the workshop, and the following funded mission studies, to emphasize those

innovative concepts that may not yet be ready for competitive evaluation. Potential participants will be informed of their status regarding participation in the workshop no later than May 4, 2001. It is anticipated that workshop participants will be notified of their status regarding study funds by June 8, 2001.

Investigators interested in participating in this first phase of the Mars Scout program are directed to http://spacescience.nasa.gov/an/marsscoutsworkshop/ for instructions on preparing letters of intent and abstracts, as well as for information on Mars Scouts, the core Mars Exploration Program, and the 2007 Mars launch opportunity.

Sincerely,

G. Scott Hubbard
Director, Mars Exploration Program
Office of Space Science