

Essay Contest Announcement

The Significance of Discovering Extraterrestrial Intelligent Life

Are we alone in the universe? This question is arguably one of the most profound questions of our time. If other forms of intelligent life do exist in our galaxy, would they also develop technology like radio that would betray their presence? Scientists have been searching for an answer ever since Frank Drake first explored radio signals from nearby stars in 1960. No signs of extraterrestrial intelligent life have yet been discovered, but investor Yuri Milner recently pledged \$100 million over ten years to intensify the search for any technological neighbors. The potential scientific rewards drive astronomers and astrobiologists to continue this effort, but the broader impacts of this discovery on our civilization and individual lives are harder to predict.

The [Blue Marble Space Institute of Science](#), in partnership with [METI International](#) and the [Beyond Center for Fundamental Concepts in Science at ASU](#), invites undergraduate students to address this theme by responding to the question: ***What would be the most significant impact of establishing remote contact with extraterrestrial intelligent life?*** The purpose of the essay contest is to stimulate creative thinking that explores how the search for extraterrestrial intelligence will affect humanity's future.

We invite essays from undergraduate students between the ages of 18 to 30. To be eligible, each applicant must be enrolled in a degree program at a qualified educational institution (2-year or 4-year college/university) for at least one term during the 2016 calendar year. Applicants should limit their essays to 1500 words or less. The deadline for essay submission is **30 November 2016** at 5:00 PM US Pacific time. Essays will be assessed based on scientific accuracy, originality, and writing style.

The author of the winning essay will receive a \$500 prize and will be invited to present his or her ideas in an episode of the "[BlueSciCon](#)" seminar series as well as lead a discussion on [SAGANet.org](#). The winning essay will also be considered for publication in a scientific journal or magazine with a commentary by an acclaimed author. Two honorable mention prizes of \$200 each will also be awarded.

Essays will be judged by a panel of BMSIS research scientists as well as an external group of scientists and writers. Essay winners will be announced on 2 February 2017.

Submit your essay to: essaycontest@bmsis.org

Visit bmsis.org/essaycontest for more details.

