

Preparing for the Distant Future of Civilization

An Essay Contest sponsored by



The activities of our global civilization are now intertwined with the evolution of the Earth system. Human civilization will face many challenges as it adapts to a rapidly changing world, and the result of many critical decisions today will have a lasting impact on generations to come. Predicting the direction of these future changes will require an understanding of the very long-term consequences of humanity's current actions on our planet. As we step deeper into the "anthropocene", an era defined by the global impact of human activities, and continue to improve our technology, our success as a civilization will depend on our ability to prepare for an uncertain future.

The [Blue Marble Space Institute of Science](#) invites participants to address this theme by responding to the question: ***In the next 100 years, how can human civilization prepare for the long-term changes to the Earth system that will occur over the coming millennium?*** The purpose of the essay contest is to stimulate creative thinking relating to space exploration and global issues by exploring how changes in the Earth system will affect humanity's future.

We invite essays from undergraduate students enrolled in a degree program at a qualified educational institution (2-year or 4-year college/university) between the ages of 18 to 30. Applicants should limit their essays to 1500 words or less. The deadline for applications is **22 April 2014** 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 "[Beer with BMSIS](#)" podcast series. The winning essay will also be considered for publication in the journal *Astrobiology* with a commentary by journalist and author Lee Billings. Two honorable mention prizes of \$200 each will also be awarded.

Essays will be judged by an expert panel of BMSIS research scientists as well as a group of outside judges of esteemed scientists and writers that include Kim Stanley Robinson, David Grinspoon, Lee Billings, and Michael Chorost. Essay winners will be announced on 20 July 2014.

Submit your essay to: essaycontest@bmsis.org

Visit bmsis.org/essaycontest for more details.