The NASA Idaho Space Grant Consortium (ISGC) was founded in 1991 as part of the larger NASA National Space Grant College and Fellowship program, which is a national network of colleges and universities working to expand opportunities for Americans to understand and participate in NASA's aeronautics and space programs by supporting and enhancing science, and engineering education, research, and outreach programs. Congress established the National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program (Space Grant) with Title II of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 1988. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico now house a Space Grant Consortium.

Idaho’s land grant institution, the University of Idaho, serves as the lead institution for the NASA ISGC. Twenty-two institutions comprise the membership of the ISGC, which includes all nine higher education institutions in the state, five science centers and museums, two science organizations, a state park, a national monument, two state departments, and two industry representatives. Dr. Jean Teasdale in the College of Engineering at the University of Idaho serves as the ISGC Director. She works with Associate Director Dr. David Atkinson in Electrical Engineering and faculty from the College of Education to facilitate ISGC programs across the state among all affiliates. Since its creation, the ISGC has included a strong collaboration between the Colleges of Engineering and Education at the University of Idaho, a unique and vital relationship that has helped the ISGC fulfill its goals and objectives.

The Idaho Space Grant Consortium’s vision is to be the voice of NASA in the state of Idaho. To achieve this vision, the ISGC uses a strong and active constituent base to provide easily accessible, highly flexible programs that focus on current and ongoing NASA initiatives that will benefit K-12 students, teachers, researchers, industry, the general public, the state of Idaho and ultimately, NASA. Programs support research enhancement, university and college recruitment, course enhancement, pre-college outreach, and public service.

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What Does the NASA ISGC Do for Idaho?

Research

Whether it’s creating alternate fuels, analyzing current-day or possible future electronic or physical structures, determining how to detect dangerous microorganisms or traveling to a distant planet, the ISGC is there. Supporting the NASA-related efforts of researchers across Idaho, the ISGC, along with the NASA Idaho EPSCoR program, links these researchers to students, NASA, and state priorities, enabling them to further their research, thus benefiting NASA, education, and statewide economic and technological advancement.

Higher Education

A college career is vital for today’s science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) workforce. The ISGC supports tomorrow’s STEM workforce today through student scholarships, fellowships, NASA and industry internships, innovative engineering and education programs, and curriculum and professional development. One program includes the Idaho Research Involving Student Engineers and Educators (RISE) program, a statewide, student-driven, experiment-based program that allows students to construct scientific payloads that are launched on high-altitude balloons to 100,000 feet, parachuted back to Earth, and recovered for analysis.

K-12 Education

Everyday, our teachers work to educate our children in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The ISGC is right alongside, helping teachers advance in these topics in order to enhance curricula that encourage students to engage in inquiry-based, hands-on learning through formal and informal education. One such example includes Idaho TECH: Mars Rover Challenge, a program that assists teachers with enacting a hands-on curriculum for 5th and 6th grade students that involves teams constructing a Mars Rover from Lego®s through team and research activities. Schools then demonstrate their final products at regional events which connect the teachers and students to workforce development opportunities and allow for evaluating program progress.

Informal Education

Chances are, you have participated in a community program that has both excited and educated you. Across the state of Idaho, the ISGC continually conducts and supports science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs that allow participants to learn and experience the excitement of NASA in a variety of forums. We invite you to become involved in these interactive, educational programs offered at museums, science centers, a state park, a national monument, and at other venues across the state. You too can be involved with NASA, even in Idaho!