



VLASS Project Memo 1

VLASS Survey Science Group

Terms of Reference

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Role

The VLASS Survey Science Group (SSG) has played a critical role in leading the scientific definition of the VLA Sky Survey proposal through to its acceptance by the NRAO Director. Recognizing the potential for the SSG to provide a significant contribution to the preliminary and critical design reviews, the implementation of the survey, the delivery of the survey data products, and engagement with the astronomy community and the public, NRAO would like its interaction with the SSG to continue into its formal project phase. Indeed, the SSG is expected to play an essential advisory role for the VLASS Project Office through to completion of the project. These Terms of Reference describe the way in which the SSG will interface with the VLASS Project Office at NRAO, with the goal of optimizing and enhancing the value of the survey for the community. Specifically, the SSG will:

1. Work with NRAO to ensure that any changes to the design and/or calibration plans that arise out of pre-survey testing preserve or enhance the key VLASS Extragalactic, Galactic, Transient, and Polarization Science goals, to the extent possible.
2. Work with NRAO to optimize the design of the pilot survey, to take place summer 2016.
3. Work with NRAO to interpret early test data to guide the ultimate design and schedule of the survey.
4. Assist NRAO in the planning for pipelines, data products and archiving, and developing community plans for extended data products to maximize the scientific return from VLASS.
5. Assist NRAO in maintaining and developing community outreach and education and outreach activities for VLASS.
6. Review any survey documentation and any survey description papers to be released to the community.

The SSG may also be requested to participate in VLASS design reviews as needed.

Term

These Terms of Reference will be ongoing until terminated by agreement between the SSG and the VLASS Project Office.

Structure

The SSG will comprise eight Working Groups, whose Co-Chairs will be members of the SSG Board, supplemented by a panel of expert community members at large, similar to the original SSG design. The Working Groups will be:

- Extragalactic Working Group
- Galactic Working Group
- Transients Working Group
- Polarization Working Group
- EPO Working Group
- Survey Implementation Working Group
- NRAO Data products, archiving and Enhanced Data Products working Group
- Expert Community Members at Large

Membership

Membership of the SSG Board will be by invitation of the SSG Board Co-Chairs, while membership of all Working Groups except for the Expert Community Members at Large will be open to the entire community. Membership of the Expert Community Members at Large group will be by through self-nomination and approval by the SSG Board Co-Chairs. The SSG Board Co-Chairs will strive to achieve a diverse Board membership. The VLASS Project Director and the NRAO Director appoint the SSG Board Co-Chairs.

Initial appointments on the SSG Board are as follows:

- Stefi Baum and Shami Chatterjee, Co-Chairs of SSG Board
- Gordon Richards and TBD, Co-Chairs of Extragalactic Working Group
- Rachel Osten and TBD, Co-Chairs of Galactic Working Group
- Gregg Hallinan and TBD, Co-Chairs of Transients Working Group
- Larry Rudnick and TBD, Co-Chairs of Polarization Working Group
- Susana Deustua and TBD, Co-Chairs of EPO Working Group
- Casey Law and TBD, Co-Chairs of Survey Implementation Working Group
- Eric Murphy and TBD, Co-Chair of NRAO Data products, archiving and Enhanced Data Products Working Group
- Rick White, Jim Condon, Tracy Clarke, Joe Lazio, Russ Taylor, Bryan Gaensler, Expert Community Members at Large

Each Working Group will have two Co-Chairs, with the second TBD in addition to those identified above. The SSG Board

The term for SSG Board membership will be two years, with the possibility of renewal subject to the annual review noted below.

Accountability

Members of the SSG Board are responsible for reporting on Working Group activities to the Board and to the VLASS Project Office, on timescales defined by the Board (typically 1-2 weeks), depending on the nature of the activities being undertaken.

Review

The VLASS Project Office will review the following annually:

- The efficacy of the SSG and its interactions with NRAO
- Membership of the SSG

- These terms of reference

Working methods

Critical to the effectiveness of both the VLASS Project Office and the SSG is good and open communication. Therefore, the opportunity for regular weekly telecons, both for the SSG Board alone and with personnel from the Project Office, will be enabled by NRAO. Dates and times of ad hoc meetings may also be arranged through Doodle polls by either the SSG Board chairs, or the VLASS Project Office. A chair of the SSG Board (or their designee), or a member of the VLASS Project Office, will chair the meetings. Agendas will be circulated prior to meetings, and minutes and action items will be distributed within 24 hours of the end of a meeting.

Additional mechanisms for sharing information, such as the VLASS wiki, Google docs, Authorea, Dropbox, or other services, may be used, and should be accessible to both the SSG Board and the VLASS Project Office.