Comments: I hope your committee has the vision to recommend clear and unwavering support for the Mars First scenario. Mars First, pursuing human exploration as fast as possible, without using the Moon as a first destination, would provide the world with an incredible vision for the future and is attainable in our generation.

Mars Exploration should be pursued via Mars First, and it should be pursued as a step on the path to Mars Colonization.

- Mars is the only location with the in situ resources necessary for self-sufficient operations. A lunar base will always require carbon imports (the moon has negligible carbon resources). An orbiting space station requires everything to be imported.
- The fuel cost from Low Earth Orbit (LEO) to Mars is the same as the fuel cost from LEO to the lunar surface. This make the Moon ineffective as a stepping stone or fuel source for travel to Mars.
- Mars First provides a clear vision with a motivating power unmatched by any other proposed space mission. Going to the Moon will always be qualified with "again". We've been there and done that.
- Robotic missions cannot match the flexibility, ingenuity and curiosity that are tied together into a human explorer. A human explorer can walk 10 times faster than the fastest robotic rover placed on Mars. A human explorer can interact directly with the martian surface and perform science and geology outside of their original mission parameters. Robots are extremely limited.
- Human exploration of Mars will almost certainly tell us if there is life on Mars. Finding evidence of life on Mars would be transformative to humanity. The implication that life is common in the Universe would change our perspective.

Mars First can be achieved in our generation. How can we fail to take up that challenge?

The Mars First plan should take the approach to do exactly what must be done and nothing more. In the words of Antoine de Saint Exupery, "Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away."

I hope you will strongly support Mars First.

(This document can be used publicly.)

Thank you,
Dee Jay Randall