

Natalie Batalha is a professor of physics and astronomy at San Jose State University in the heart of Silicon Valley, California and co-investigator on NASA's Kepler Mission. She holds a bachelor's in physics from the University of California (UC), Berkeley and a doctorate in astrophysics from UC Santa Cruz. Batalha started her career as a stellar spectroscopist studying young, sun-like stars. After a post-doctoral fellowship in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Batalha returned to California. Inspired by the growing number of exoplanet discoveries she joined the team led by William Borucki at NASA's Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, Calif., working on transit photometry -- an emerging technology for finding exoplanets. As a member of the Kepler team, Batalha is responsible for the selection of the more than 150,000 stars the spacecraft monitors and works closely with team members at Ames to identify viable planet candidates from Kepler photometry. As Director of the Systems Teaching Institute at the NASA Research Park, Batalha is responsible for creating programs and resources for students pursuing careers in fields relevant to the mission of NASA Ames.