Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, ocean Ecosystem (PACE)

Life of a Spacecraft (S/C)

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• Starting with very little info about the mission, a team made up of pieces of people from electrical, mechanical, thermal, navigation, software, etc. considered a few designs before settling on a rough concept of PACE

• From there, the team started many trades to fit within the threshold science requirements and the budget:
  – How many instruments should we have? What type of science? What resolution?
  – What bands and data rates to send science data?

• The largest trade was who should build the spacecraft; proposals were solicited from companies to compare to the NASA team’s concept

# of people working on the S/C: ~3  
Launch date: 8/2022
Year 2 2016 - 2017

- NASA Headquarters decided that NASA GSFC should build the spacecraft!

- So, the team went to work:
  - Developing requirements
  - Starting the design
  - Buying parts before we even had requirements or designs; some take a year to get
  - Adding more team members

- This was also the 1st year being cancelled in the president’s budget
  - So, we spent the year trying to save our mission politically and fiscally by clinging to the latest tech, e.g., encryption, launch vehicle ride share, laser communication, green propulsion, delay tolerant networking)
  - We would be cancelled 3 more times after this

# of people working on the S/C: ~17
Launch date: 8/2022
Year 3 2017 - 2018

- Spacecraft concept was still in flux – we still don’t know what instruments we had on the mission (only 2 shown here, but had as many as 5 at one point)

- Non-NASA: NASA cannot build everything itself, so started requesting proposals for components despite not knowing exactly what the spacecraft would look like

- NASA: For things NASA was building
  - Built engineering test unit (ETU) boards
  - Refined concepts for other components

# of people working on the S/C: ~62
Launch date: 8/2022
Year 4 2018 - 2019

- Spacecraft concept finally matured (we ended up with 3 instruments!), so could finally buy the custom structure panels

- **Non-NASA**: We selected the companies to build the spacecraft components. It turns out there is only ~2 - 3 companies in the world that can build each of our components!

- **NASA**: Meanwhile at NASA...Engineering test units (ETUs) were built and tested to prove out the NASA component designs

# of people working on the S/C: ~108
Launch date: 8/2022
Year 5 2019 - 2020

- **Non-NASA:** We visited the many people building our components and confirmed they would work with the NASA design.
- **NASA:**
  - Finalized the design
  - Started building flight components
  - Built a flat satellite (FlatSat!) with the ETUs

- We were furloughed for 6 weeks and were not able to talk to each other or the companies making our components, so we had a few surprises when we could finally talk to them.

# of people working on the S/C: ~140  
Launch date: 3/2023
Year 6 2020 - 2021

- Got shutdown by COVID for 5 months
- When we got back, we lost another month because we could not find one screw in 70,000 packages that have been stacking up
- Non-NASA: Continued to work with companies to deliver components
- NASA: Continued building components when we were allowed back

# of people working on the S/C: ~150
Launch date: 1/2024
• Finally, we built a spacecraft!

# of people working on the S/C: ~130
Launch date: 1/2024
It Takes a Team!