

Space & NASA, the Places Where Our Community Can Grow

BY DR. CLAUDIA SCHRADER

Who can forget the opening line of the TV show *Star Trek*: "Space, the final frontier," spoken by the character Captain Kirk. No wonder it could be more pronounced today. Space is a place of possibilities and universal appeal. As president of Kishwaukee Community College, I'm proud KCC is one of six community colleges to advance science education through the launch of the "Here 2 Observe" program.

Funded by NASA, the five-year program brings together partners focused on space exploration, paired with the NASA Johnson Space Center mission to Titan, Saturn's largest moon scheduled to launch in 2027. A collaborative effort between KCC, Stony Brook University, the American Museum of Natural History and NASA, the program offers an authentic STEM learning experience as well as employment opportunities for interested students, providing them with opportunities to learn about careers in planetary science and connecting them with mentors and institutions.

It also recognizes the vital role of community colleges in training a diverse workforce and scientific community. KCC is one of the few community colleges in the United States with a strong emphasis on planetary science. The program is a partnership between KCC and Stony Brook University, a NASA Johnson Space Center mission to Titan, Saturn's largest moon scheduled to launch in 2027. A collaborative effort between KCC, Stony Brook University, the American Museum of Natural History and NASA, the program offers an authentic STEM learning experience as well as employment opportunities for interested students, providing them with opportunities to learn about careers in planetary science and connecting them with mentors and institutions.