

## Editorial

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# The new face of the *International Journal of Astrobiology*

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With this issue of the *International Journal of Astrobiology* there are major changes occurring. We have a new face in the form of a new cover design, new chief editorship, an enlarged and broadened editorial board and most importantly a new outlook for the journal. This new outlook reflects the new and exciting era of research in astrobiology such as the Kepler mission rapidly discovering new extrasolar planets, the Mars Science Laboratory (MSL) mission to Mars that will tell us more about the possibility of life on Mars extant and extinct, and new findings suggesting that lakes rather than a vast ocean exists beneath the surface of Europa.

Since the Journal's inception the field of astrobiology has expanded across the world from Europe and the United States to Japan, India, China and Brazil just to name a few countries now embracing the field. The goal of the *International Journal of Astrobiology* remains, as it has been, to publish original basic research papers that investigate the fundamental principals of all aspects of astrobiology ranging from the origin and evolution of life at the chemical and molecular level to global climate change, as well as critical reviews of all aspects of astrobiology. We also encourage the submission of papers focusing on the history and philosophy of science of astrobiology. We think of astrobiology in the broad sense in that it addresses three basic questions that have been asked by humans in various ways for generations: How does life begin and evolve? Does life exist elsewhere in the universe? And what is the future of life on Earth and beyond? Accordingly, the discipline of astrobiology embraces the search for potentially inhabited planets within our solar system and beyond our solar system. This research entails laboratory and field investigations of the origins and early evolution of life, and studies of the potential of life to adapt to future challenges, both on Earth and in space. These studies require truly interdisciplinary research that combines molecular biology, ecology, evolution, geology, geophysics, planetary science, astronomy, information science, missions into space and related disciplines. The broad interdisciplinary character of astrobiology compels us to strive to achieve the most comprehensive and inclusive understanding of biological, planetary and cosmic phenomena.

The *International Journal of Astrobiology* seeks to publish papers in all aspects of astrobiology rapidly and efficiently. The goals of the new editorial board and new chief editorship are to publish the highest calibre astrobiology research and promote this published research to the science community at large. There is a worldwide growth of astrobiology and the *International Journal of Astrobiology* will be a driving force in its continued forward expansion.