

Grant Tremblay – Colloquium Seminar – April 10, 2025
Center for Astrophysics/Harvard & Smithsonian

Title: Our fading age of discovery: Why it's happening, and why we can't give up

Abstract: So, good news / bad news: We are in a new golden age of cosmic discovery. The *James Webb Space Telescope* is our new great time machine in the sky, poised to write new chapters of the cosmic story. The *Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope* marches toward launch, the Vera Rubin Observatory is on the verge of First Light, and our national community must never forget that we are *profoundly* lucky as a field, enjoying enormous support by a taxpaying public that so effortlessly shares in our wonderment of the cosmos. And yet we now walking a knife's edge of *completely* losing the decade and far beyond. This talk will begin with an urgent and *absurdly* gloomy summary of the manifold threats to fundamental research and prospects for federally-funded science in the coming years. It will end with optimism, strategizing, and a discussion with the audience about *why* we build space telescopes and rovers on alien worlds, and why grand pursuits of discovery are worth the cost.

Background: Grant is the Federal Astrophysicist and External Relations Lead at SAO, up until recently the Deputy PI and Project Scientist for the High Resolution Camera for the Chandra X-ray Observatory and Senior Vice President of the American Astronomical Society