

Maria T. Zuber

Biography



Geophysics

B.A., University of Pennsylvania, 1980

Sc.M., Brown University, 1983

Ph.D., Brown University, 1986

Maria T. Zuber, the E. A. Griswold Professor of Geophysics, has been a member of the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology since 1995 and served as the Head of the Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences from 2003-2011. In January 2013, she was appointed Vice President for Research with overall responsibility for research administration and policy at the Institute. She oversees more than a dozen interdisciplinary research laboratories and centers, including the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research, the MIT Energy Initiative, the Plasma Science and Fusion Center, the Research Laboratory of Electronics, the Institute for Nanosoldier Technologies, the Center for Material Science and Engineering, and the Haystack Observatory. The Office of Sponsored Programs, International Scholars Office, and Division of Comparative Medicine, among others report to the Vice President for Research. The VPR is responsible for research integrity and compliance and plays a central role in research relationships with the federal government.

Zuber's research bridges planetary geophysics and the technology of space-based laser and radio systems, and she has published over 300 papers. Since 1990, she has held leadership roles associated with scientific experiments or instrumentation on nine NASA missions; at present, she remains involved with six of these missions. Zuber is principal investigator for NASA's Gravity Recovery and Interior Laboratory (GRAIL) mission, an effort to map the Moon's gravitational field, begun in 2008.

Dr. Zuber has won numerous awards including the MIT James R. Killian Jr. Faculty Achievement Award, NASA's Outstanding Scientific Achievement Medal, Distinguished Public Service Medal and Outstanding Public Leadership Medal, as well as the American Geophysical Union Harry H. Hess Medal, the Geological Society of America G. K. Gilbert Award and the American Astronautical Society/Planetary Society Carl Sagan Memorial Award. She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and American Philosophical Society, and is a fellow for the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Geological Society and the American Geophysical Union.

In 2004, Zuber served on the Presidential Commission on the Implementation of United States Space Exploration Policy. In 2002, Discover magazine named her one of the 50 most important women in science and, in 2008, she was named to the USNews/Harvard Kennedy School List of America's Best Leaders.