

**UNAVCO**

BROWN BAG DISCUSSION:  
ELEVATOR SPEECHES



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# “SELLING” YOURSELF AND YOUR WORK

- You have just completed your informational interview with a manager at your dream company
- You feel good about the employer, and you think you want to pursue an actual position in that organization
- You are headed toward the elevator after leaving the interviewee’s office
- You step onto the elevator, the doors start to close, and a hand shoots in to hold them open
- You have done your homework, so you recognize the VP of the department you are interested in when she steps onto the elevator...
- WHAT DO YOU DO?????

- **What is an elevator speech?**

- An approximately one minute summary of your work for a general audience
- Gets straight to the point
- “Ready” for you to pull out on any occasion
- An elevator speech can also be about yourself and your professional/academic goals

- **Who is your audience?**

- Assume your listener is smart, but doesn't know much of anything about your topic

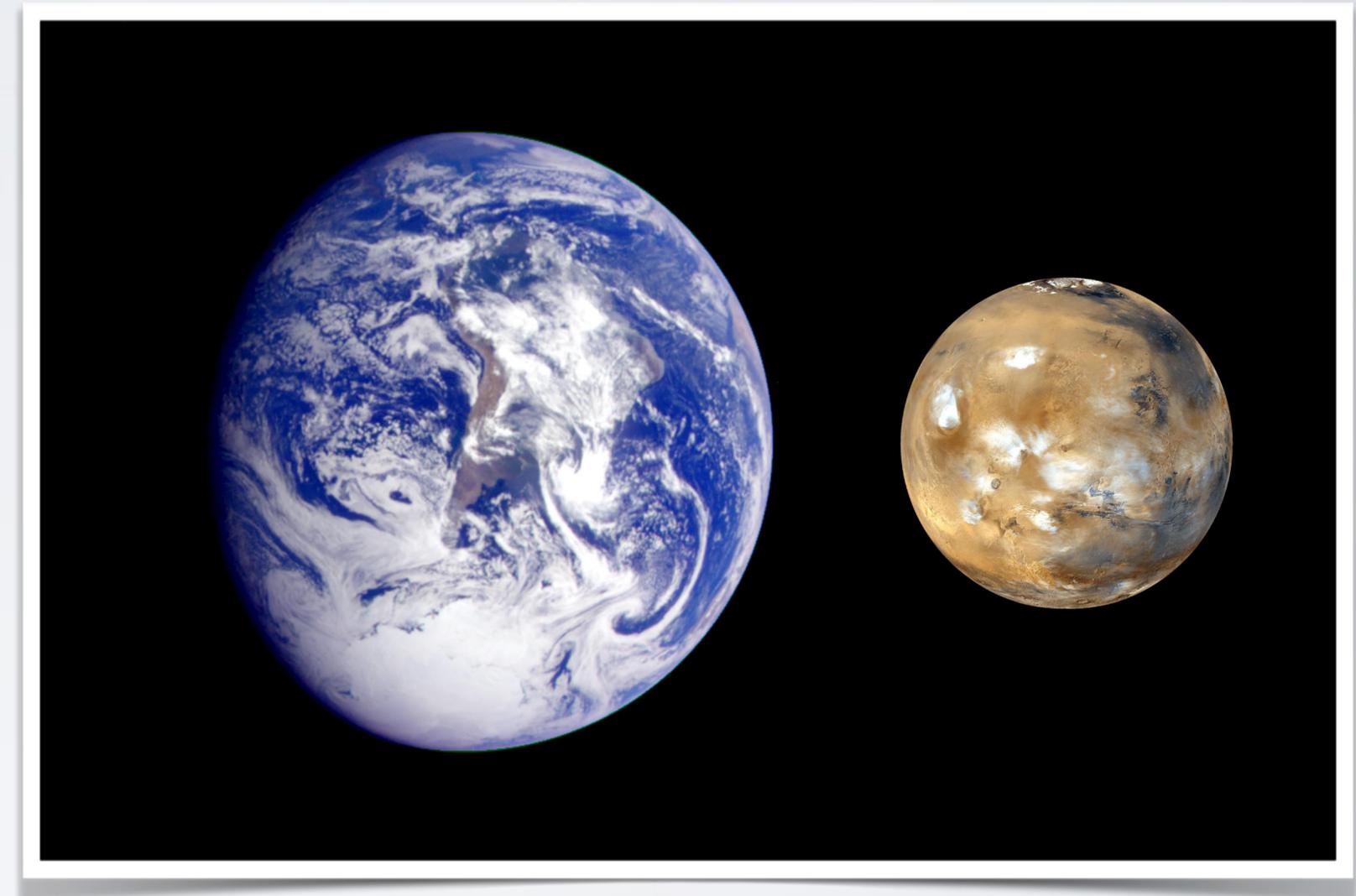
# THE ELEVATOR SPEECH “RECIPE”

1. Start with the big picture
2. Explain why we care
3. Put your work into the context of the big picture
4. Leave out the specifics and jargon!



## AN EXAMPLE

- One of the things I used to study was the morphology, emplacement, and evolution of various flow types on the surface of Mars
- If I want to tell my Aunt Cheryl about my research, what should I say?



# AN EXAMPLE

- **Start with the big picture**

- Like Earth, Mars is a terrestrial planet, and the surface shows evidence of the effects of water.

- **Why are we interested in that?**

- Understanding the timing, distribution, and state of water on the surface of Mars provides insight into the history of the planet.

- **How does my research fit into the big picture?**

- I used new, high-resolution remote sensing data to study previously unrecognized features in the Martian landscape to determine whether they had been formed by water.

- **Leave out the specifics**

- My Auntie doesn't need to know that there is a statistically significant difference in surface roughness between the main 4 flow types identified on the rim of the young 29-km crater in Amazonis Planitia!

# ELEVATOR SPEECH WORKSHOP

- Talk through the key elements of your elevator speech with your colleagues:
  - What is the big picture?
  - Why are we interested in that/why do we do that?
  - How does my work fit in?
- Write out your elevator speech and practice it!
  - Your speech will likely evolve over the course of the summer....