

The Keck Institute for Space Studies
presents the following webinar:

Interstellar Comets

Visitors from Another Solar System - Natural or Artificial?

Dr. Karen Meech

Institute for Astronomy, University of Hawaii

Tuesday
September 14, 2021
5:00 PM Lecture

The discovery of the first interstellar object (ISO), 1I/ʻOumuamua, passing through the solar system in 2017 has provoked intense, sustained interest by the scientific community – but the interest has not always been purely scientific.

There are some who speculate that ʻOumuamua’s characteristics can be better explained as alien technology – but this is not an accepted view in the community. If we had sent a space mission to ʻOumuamua we could have resolved this very quickly, but unfortunately the current NASA mission calls are not compatible with missions that respond very quickly to new discoveries.

When the Rubin survey telescope begins its survey from Chile in 2022/2023 we expect to find many more ISOs, and it is time to start thinking about new types of missions that could respond to exciting new discoveries such as interstellar objects. This talk will summarize what we know about our first two interstellar visitors, how we know it, and what they are, and will present some new ways we might explore these intriguing objects in the future.

Registration is required at kiss.caltech.edu