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NASA ADMINISTRATOR AND FORMER ASTRONAUT CHARLES F. BOLDEN INSPIRES HOWARD AUDIENCE

Washington, DC -- Major General, USMC (retired) and NASA Administrator Charles F. Bolden Jr. provided personal reflections and a fascinating overview of agency goals, and current and future exploratory missions to an audience of Howard students, faculty and administrators on November 19, 2015. The event was sponsored by the Office of the Associate Provost and Graduate Studies in the recently opened Interdisciplinary Research Building.

Bolden challenged students to get the most out of their education and to focus on good study habits while in school. “Don’t be afraid to work hard, to take risks, and to fail,” because the only true failure is if you do not get back up and try again, he stated.

He recounted the long and celebrated history of NASA, which he stated goes back 100 years. Today, the agency is comprised of 18,000 civil servants, supported by nine NASA centers, with a budget of $18 billion. Bolden discussed his experiences as an astronaut, including conducting environmentally conscious experiments and orbiting Earth every 90 minutes – actually witnessing the breathtaking view of the sun rising and setting in brilliant sequence every 45 minutes.

He also explained that his current work of assisting with international space travel and exploration includes overseeing more than 700 international agreements with more than 120 countries. Bolden punctuated his discussion with dazzling photos of space exploration, including of the Mars Science Laboratory Curiosity rover missions. In discussing NASA’s exploration of Mars, he explained that robots will probably build and prepare Mars for human habitation, leading to human missions to the Red Planet in the mid-2030s.
“Next to being entrusted by President Obama with the responsibility of leading our incredible NASA team in the quest to put humans on Mars, I consider my next-most exhilarating and rewarding point to be my assignment as Commander of STS-60, the first Space Shuttle mission to have a Russian Cosmonaut fly as a full crew member. In the two-year period of time during which we trained and flew our mission, I was responsible for overseeing the training for and conduct of our nine-day mission as well as ensuring the successful integration of our crew families during this period. In order to carry out these responsibilities, we moved two Russian Cosmonauts, prime crew member Sergei Krikalev and backup Vladimir Titov, along with their families, from Moscow to Houston; helped get them into housing with children in public schools in the local communities; and, over time, established life-time friendships that we cherish to this day,” he stated.

Stating that it was NASA’s continuous commitment to reach new heights, Bolden ended his discussion with a quote by Nkosi Johnson, the youthful South African AIDS activist who died in 2001: “Do all that you can with what you have in the time that you have in the place that you are."

To learn more about NASA’s missions and programs, visit: www.nasa.gov.