

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics

Diversity and Inclusion Plan



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www.aiaa.org/workinggroups/#DWG

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Numerous studies show that the demographics of the nation are changing- the population of the US is becoming more diverse. In order to meet the challenges of the 21st century we must continuously strive for a workforce that reflects America. To do this successfully it is necessary to promote an environment that values individual respect, dignity and professional growth. Aerospace problems are complex and becoming increasingly so. We all know the power and impact of a solution derived from a group of people with different identities, strengths, backgrounds, and ideas.

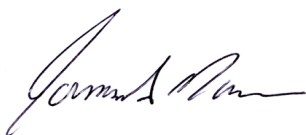
There are many programs targeted at increasing diverse engagement in the STEM fields. But the efforts cannot stop at engagement; efforts directed at the support and retention of new entrants to the workforce are also important to build and maintain a sustainable industry for the future. In addition, efforts to increase diversity in the workforce must be accompanied by an increasing awareness and support of a culture of inclusion. The benefit of having a diverse group of people engaged in problem solving can only be realized when every team member feels they have a voice, when input is actively sought across the team, and when the culture promotes an environment where every input is discussed and debated.

Our ability to attract, develop and retain a quality diverse workforce is the key to the Aerospace industry's continuing success. Consequently over a year ago the Board created a Diversity Working Group and directed it to create a diversity and inclusion plan for the AIAA to address this topic. The question put before the Diversity Working Group was "How can AIAA play a positive role on this issue?"

This plan is the result of year-long effort devoted to studying and gathering data on the current status of the Aerospace industry, of understanding some of the challenges and targeting what the AIAA can do to meet some of those challenges. It is a place to start and should be considered a living document. The plan encompasses near, mid and long term actions targeted at understanding and gathering appropriate metrics, raising awareness and initiating proactive programming, and continuing to evolve the AIAA strategic approach.

Please join us in supporting AIAA's diversity and inclusion efforts by raising awareness of and being open to the ideas and perspectives of others, and learning more about diversity. Our industry will only grow stronger as our workforce evolves.

Jim Maser



President, AIAA

Sandra Magnus



Executive Director, AIAA

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Executive Summary

AIAA is the world's largest aerospace professional society. Data shows that AIAA membership is less diverse than the aerospace and aeronautical workforce at large. As the reach and impact of AIAA becomes more global—and if AIAA intends to lead our community rather than lag behind it—these numbers indicate that more attention and diligence in promoting diversity within our membership and leadership positions is needed. President Jim Albaugh identified diversity and inclusion as a critical issue for the future of the aerospace industry, as diversity of thought and experience is an important ingredient in innovation and arriving at optimal solutions to problems. The Diversity Working Group (DWG) was chartered as a long-term working group, reporting to the AIAA Board of Directors, to focus on diversity across the aerospace community writ large.

For AIAA to fulfill its mission, namely *“to inspire and advance the future of aerospace for the benefit of humanity,”* and to be the voice of the aerospace profession, we must, at the minimum, have the membership to represent the community constituents. A stated objective of the AIAA strategic imperative to “Develop and expand our community” is to “engage underrepresented constituencies.” To achieve this objective, we must take an active role in attracting and retaining a diverse membership and in raising awareness and educating the community about diversity and inclusion. In addition, we must provide diverse leadership and role models to establish a positive mentoring and nurturing environment within the Institute.

The AIAA Diversity and Inclusion Plan establishes the Institute's commitment to diversity and inclusion. The plan gives three diversity and inclusion goals: conduct reliable, representative, and continuous assessment of AIAA membership diversity; raise awareness of diversity and inclusion; and facilitate improvements in diversity of AIAA members and its groups. Each goal has objectives, which in turn has a series of recommendations for implementation. While the diversity initiatives focus on expanding the membership, we also pay special attention to inclusion to ensure that AIAA not only attracts a diverse membership, but also provides a positive and supportive environment for professional growth and development for all members. Although diversity is critical for AIAA, so is inclusion. Inclusion is to ensure **all** members feel valued, fully part of the group, and supported. Many feel that diversity only addresses a smaller percentage of the population and that it does not address or even competes against the majority culture. With diversity and inclusion we appreciate, respect, and value all members because we need the entire efforts of every one of our members to have a successful organization.

Commitment to Diversity

With over 30,000 members from 88 countries and 95 corporate members, AIAA represents a powerful and diverse community of people with many different identities, strengths, backgrounds, thoughts, and ideas. This diversity allows AIAA to play a leadership role to help shape the future of the aerospace community and industry. But in one important and fundamental way, AIAA's leadership is in jeopardy.

Data shows that AIAA membership is less diverse than the aerospace and aeronautical workforce at large, which in turn is less diverse than other STEM fields. These numbers indicate that more attention and diligence in promoting diversity within our membership and leadership positions is needed. Behind the numbers are people. Just as each of us has a unique personal story about how we were inspired and encouraged to enter the aerospace field, we never know where the next individual contributor or leader may come from in the future. Equally important is the need to foster inclusion, a culture and environment that gives all members a sense of belonging, of being respected and valued for who we are, and having supportive energy and commitment from others. As we lay out the Diversity and Inclusion Plan, the inclusion aspects will not only directly affect the members within AIAA, but indirectly, our workplace as well.

Recognizing the importance of these trends, in 2014, AIAA President Jim Albaugh asked that a study be done focusing on diversity across the Institute. A small group of Board members and volunteers devoted time in summer and fall of 2014 exploring diversity status and challenges both in our community and the aerospace industry. In January 2015, they reported their findings and made recommendations to the Board on how the Institute can more effectively engage on this important issue that affects us across the industry [1]. One of the recommendations was to create a long-term diversity working group, reporting to the AIAA Board, to focus on diversity across the aerospace community writ large. The DWG was thus chartered.

It is paramount for AIAA to ensure that the strategic imperatives listed below are realized through diversity and inclusion:

- To develop and expand our community
- To strengthen our existing community
- To deliver exceptional results

The DWG's goals and initiatives support two objectives of the AIAA strategic imperative to "Develop and expand our community." These objectives are: to "engage underrepresented constituencies" and to "develop a comprehensive outreach and engagement strategy." The strategic imperative to "Strengthen our existing

community” has the objective to “develop and institutionalize adaptable and forward-leaning culture.” This will be best addressed by considering the current and future demographics of the aerospace industry. The strategic imperative to “Deliver exceptional results” has the objective to “Strengthen leadership relationship with government, industry, and academia.” The DWG will seek to create relationships with these entities that support and foster diversity and inclusion.

AIAA must take an active role in attracting and retaining a diverse membership and in raising awareness and educating the community about diversity and inclusion. We also must provide diverse leadership and role models to establish a positive mentoring and nurturing environment. To shape the future of aerospace we must utilize and optimize the contributions from the entire workforce available for innovation, productivity, and intellectual progress.

There are many well-documented benefits of having diverse teams and leadership. A study from McKinsey Quarterly published in 2012 found that for companies ranking in the top quartile of executive-board diversity, returns on equity (ROEs) were 53 percent higher, on average, than they were for those in the bottom quartile [2]. An investigation of 500 U.S. businesses found that companies with more race- and gender-diverse teams had higher sales revenue, more customers, greater market share, and greater profits than did less diverse companies [3, 4].

President Jim Albaugh identified diversity as a critical issue for the future of the aerospace industry, as diversity of thought and experience is an important ingredient in innovation and in arriving at optimal solutions to problems. All AIAA members have unique skills and abilities that come from their personal background, experiences, education, interests, priorities, and all other factors that make us unique as human beings. To be as inclusive as possible, we must value and leverage every member’s individuality and contributions, and we do that by acting on our Diversity Strategy: create an inclusive culture that gives AIAA a competitive advantage, and fully engage all members and communities to extend this diverse culture throughout the AIAA organization to attract, develop, and retain the best members in serving our cause.

Although diversity is critical for AIAA, so is inclusion. Inclusion is to ensure all members feel valued and fully part of the team. This is imperative in order for every person to bring their “whole selves” to their work, to the organization, and to the community. Members need to feel free to express their ideas and talents to the organization. Many of us can relate to times in their lives when they were not invited or welcomed into “the circle” whether that was not being asked to join at the table, not being selected for a sporting team or conference team, or invited to happy hour/dinner with colleagues at an AIAA conference or an industry

interactions. The loss of productivity and energy is measurable in this exclusion so the intent of the inclusion is to ensure all feel included and invited to participate in the activities of the organization, the aerospace community, and the industry at large. Many feel that diversity only addresses a small percentage of the population and that it does not benefit the “majority” culture. With diversity and inclusion we appreciate, respect, and value all members because we need the entire efforts of every one of our members to be the best.

The aerospace industry can be significantly strengthened by increasing diversity and inclusion in our workforce. The goal of the DWG is to ensure that we encourage participation and collaboration across all genders, races, and ethnicities and to enhance our representation of the entire industry. The Diversity and Inclusion Plan, developed by the DWG, aims to fulfill AIAA’s commitment to diversity and inclusion:

1. To maintain and bolster AIAA’s role as a leader in aerospace that advances and inspires the future of aerospace by truly representing and leading a diverse community,
2. To meet the increasing need of the future diverse aerospace workforce by strengthening relationships with diversity leadership in government, industry, and academia,
3. To improve membership retention by providing diverse leadership and role models within the organization, and
4. To be the recognized and undisputed leading organization and focal point for successful role models and ideas in the global aerospace community.

Current State and Challenges

AIAA Diversity in Context

We first discuss the status of women and underrepresented minorities (URMs) in the aerospace and defense (A&D) workforce. The definition of the A&D field varies. In general, it includes research, design, development, test and manufacture of aircraft, engines and parts; missiles, space vehicles and parts; as well as search, detection and navigation instruments. In some surveys (e.g., Aviation Week 2015 Workforce Study: A Reality Check as Competition for Talent Increases [5]), it is expanded to include specialties such as robotics, autonomous systems, and work related to materials and miniaturized satellites. We also note that in the aerospace profession, URMs constitute the following categories based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics: African American or Black, American Indian, Native American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, and people who identify as more than one race. Thus, Asians are not considered as part of the URMs, but their statistics are included here for reference.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity, 2014 [6] states that of almost 150,000 aerospace engineering professionals in the United States, 15.6% are women, 6.2% are African American or Black, 11.4% are Hispanic or Latino, and 10.7% are Asian. Findings of the Aviation Week 2015 Workforce Study [5] indicate that 14.6% of over 850,000 aerospace and defense employees are female, and that 22.9% are under-represented populations. (Here “underrepresented populations” is the jargon used for U.S. government reporting and reflects the combination of people of color). The National Science Board’s Science and Engineering Indicators 2014 [7] reports that among the 91,000 aerospace, aeronautical, or astronautical engineers in 2010, 11% were women, 3.3% African American or Black, 8.8% Hispanic or Latino, 3.3% more than one race, and less than 1% American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander, and 9.9% Asian.

AIAA membership data¹ indicates that representation in these key demographics and other identified diverse groups is lower than national workforce figures. AIAA’s membership is in excess of 30,000 and includes some 7,000 student members. Women comprise about 8% of professional members (14% of student members, and 9% of total membership). Women represent 6% of both AIAA Fellows and Associate Fellows. There is considerable variability in gender diversity across AIAA’s different groups and committees, ranging from 25% in some committees to 0% in others. In general, many committees with a sizeable roster, between 25 and 45 members, have less than 3 women members. Relative to all STEM fields, where women comprise 24% of the

workforce in the United States [8] and 17% in the European Union [9], gender diversity is underrepresented in the aerospace profession. Gender diversity in AIAA's membership is lower than that of the aerospace field.

Only 20% of AIAA professional members elect to indicate race or ethnicity in membership information¹. Of that 20%, about 75% are Caucasian, 2% African American or Black, 4.5% Hispanic or Latino, less than 1% are American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander, and 17% Asian. Compared to professional members, AIAA's student membership elects to disclose race information more often and is more diverse. With 55% of student members indicating race, 62% are Caucasian, 3.5% are African American or Black, 11% are Hispanic or Latino, less than 1% are American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 23% are Asian.

¹AIAA uses the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity, which has 5 categories for race (Asian, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and White) and 2 categories for ethnicity (Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino), and the option of selecting one or more racial designations.

Table 1. Demographics of women and underrepresented minorities (URMs) in the aerospace and defense (A&D)* workforce.

Source	Population	Women	URMs**				Asian
			African American or Black	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian, Native American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	More than one race	
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity, 2014	Aerospace Engineering Professionals (150,000)	15.6%	6.2%	11.4%			10.7%
Aviation Week 2015 Workforce Study	Aerospace and Defense Engineering Professionals (850,000)	14.6%	(Under-represented populations in engineering***) 22.9%				
National Science Board's Science and Engineering Indicators 2014 (2010 STATISTICS)	Aerospace, aeronautical or astronautical engineers (91,000)	11%	3.3%	8.8%	<1%	3.3%	9.9%
AIAA	All Members, including student members (31,000)	9%					
AIAA	Professional Members (23,000)	8%	2%	4.5%	<1%		17%
AIAA	Student Members (7,000)	14%	3.5%	11%	<1%		23%

*The definition of the A&D field varies. In general, it includes research, design, develop, test and manufacture aircraft, engines and parts; missiles, space vehicles and parts; as well as search, detection and navigation instruments.

**Underrepresented Minorities (URMs) constitute the following categories based on US Bureau of Labor Statistics: African American or Black, American Indian, Native American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, and people who identify as more than one race. Thus, Asians are not considered as part of the URMs, but their statistics are included here for reference.

***For Aviation Week Study: Under-Represented Population is the jargon used for U.S. government reporting and reflects the combination of people of color.

Challenges & Opportunities

Data shows that AIAA membership is less diverse than the aerospace and aeronautical workforce at large, which in turn is less diverse than other STEM fields. As the premier organization for aerospace engineering professionals, and in support of its tagline of “Shaping the Future of Aerospace,” it is imperative that the composition of AIAA membership evolve to first reflect that of the aerospace community at large, and then lead it toward greater diversity along with other STEM fields.

The low reporting rate of race data, particularly among professional members, is a major challenge for the Institute that hinders effective and accurate evaluation of its membership’s diversity and tracking of progress pursuant to efforts on the same. Noting that student member reporting on race is notably higher, there is an opportunity to identify underlying reasons for underreporting and to promote higher voluntary reporting among professional members.

Even though the AIAA student membership is more diverse, we want to attract more women and URMs to increase the pool. Unfortunately data on student membership retention past graduation is lacking. There is an important opportunity to improve overall Institute diversity by targeting student member transition to professional grade.

In addition to attracting a diverse membership, we also need to ensure that we cultivate a culture that enables individuals to contribute to their full potential. By creating a truly inclusive environment we will in turn further retention. Difficulty in assessment of the Institute’s diversity for specific subgroups stems from the low reporting rate on race noted above. For instance, there is insufficient or no data to characterize diversity in terms of race and ethnicity across membership grade, AIAA award winners, and Technical Committees (TCs)/Program Committees (PCs)/Working Group membership. Recognizing that committees are pivotal in shaping the aerospace domain and are a key mechanism of service in the Institute, there is tremendous opportunity for TCs and PCs to take steps in favor of more diverse membership, and identify and support qualified individuals as candidates for awards or membership grade elevation.

Increasing the diversity of speakers at AIAA programs also presents an opportunity toward increased diversity and inclusion, and is important to the Institute for many reasons. Not only is it valuable to hear opinions and technical material from a diverse group of experts, but these individuals have the chance to touch the lives of others while being a role model for the many women and URMs who attend such events.

Goals and Implementation

Listed below are the overarching goals for AIAA diversity and inclusion, their corresponding objectives, and implementation steps for each objective to allow for status tracking. The goals identified by the AIAA Diversity Working Group map directly to the AIAA's strategic imperatives and stated objectives. The efforts and initiatives outlined here are intended to foster a diverse membership and to provide a positive and supportive environment for professional growth and development. There are three major goals: conduct reliable, representative, and continuous assessment of AIAA membership diversity; raise awareness of diversity and inclusion; and facilitate improvements in diversity of AIAA members and its groups.

1. GOAL: Conduct reliable, representative, and continuous assessment of AIAA membership diversity
 - 1.1. OBJECTIVE: Increase self-reporting rate of gender, race/ethnicity information
 - 1.1.1. [Semi-annually] Examine information elicitation in AIAA membership / renewal mechanisms (Website/printed forms, etc.)
 - 1.1.2. [Continuing Effort] Update membership mechanisms as needed
 - 1.1.3. [Semi-annually] For existing members, solicit self-reporting with communications campaign and grassroots movement (e.g., via announcements at the TC level, Region, Section and Local Chapters, etc.)
 - 1.1.4. [Semi-annually] Continue monitoring self-reporting rate.
 - 1.2. OBJECTIVE: Track representation metrics for women and URM members across groups within the Institute
 - 1.2.1. [Semi-annually] Institute-wide, across member grades, including nominations
 - 1.2.2. [Semi-annually] Technical, Program and Standards Committees, including leadership roles, elected positions, and nominations.
 - 1.2.3. [Semi-annually] Board of Directors, standing and ad hoc committees, advisory boards, and other governance bodies, including leadership roles, elected positions, and nominations
 - 1.2.4. [Semi-annually] Regional, sections, and chapters, including leadership roles, elected positions and nominations
 - 1.2.5. [Continuing Effort] Planning committees for forums and other events, including leadership, nominations, plenary speakers, Forum 360 panelists and speakers
 - 1.2.6. [Continuing Effort] AIAA awards, including evaluators, awardees, nominees (will be challenging for nominees and awardees who are not AIAA members who do not provide this data)

- 1.2.7. [Annually] Compile and disseminate an annual AIAA diversity report based on tracking metrics, assessment against goals, and historical trends
- 1.3. OBJECTIVE: Evaluate diversity and inclusion culture in AIAA
 - 1.3.1. [At least every 2 years] Develop and conduct surveys (online) and report
 - 1.3.2. [At least every 3 years] Update and report
- 2. GOAL: Raise awareness of diversity and inclusion
 - 2.1. OBJECTIVE: Maintain an Institute Diversity and Inclusion Plan
 - 2.1.1. [Completed] Generate plan, secure leadership input and support, publish, disseminate, advertise
 - 2.1.2. [At least every 3 years] Update goals, objectives, and recommendations
 - 2.2. OBJECTIVE: Plan and execute diversity events
 - 2.2.1. [Semi-annually] Conduct events at forums, such as SciTech, or regional, section, and chapter meetings addressing diversity and its value
 - 2.2.2. [Annually] Support events that address other membership issues that indirectly affect diversity
 - 2.3. OBJECTIVE: Showcase existing diversity at the Institute
 - 2.3.1. [At least 3 per year] Create a selection of diverse member profiles to be made available online via AIAA website, including region, section and local chapters; create soft-copy document
 - 2.3.2. [Continuing Effort] Create a DWG page on the AIAA website, and make available selected resources such as the Diversity Plan
 - 2.3.3. [Continuing Effort] Incorporate diversity language and features in the membership section of the AIAA website
- 3. GOAL: Facilitate improvements in diversity of AIAA members and its groups
 - 3.1. OBJECTIVE: Promote and support the growth of AIAA's diverse membership
 - 3.1.1. [Annually] Identify and disseminate best practices for attracting and retaining diverse individuals as new AIAA members
 - 3.1.2. [Annually] Identify and disseminate best practices for attracting and retaining diverse AIAA members to TCs/PCs, working groups, as well as leadership roles in region, section and local chapter levels.
 - 3.1.3. [Continuing Effort] Work with organizers to increase the number of diverse speakers, panelists, and other focal roles for all events including those at the region, section and local chapter levels.
 - 3.1.4. [At least 1 per year] Work with employee sponsors to garner support for URM and women employee engagement with AIAA in leadership and technical roles

- 3.2. OBJECTIVE: Promote and support retention of AIAA’s diverse membership
 - 3.2.1. [Continuing Effort] Support existing Institute efforts, especially at the local chapter, section and region levels, to address poor retention of student members after graduation
 - 3.2.2. [Continuing Effort] A member of the DWG to be part of the ad hoc committee for student retention (membership services)
- 3.3. OBJECTIVE: Leadership development and engagement
 - 3.3.1. [Continuing Effort] Identify and mentor diverse members for leadership roles at the Institute
 - 3.3.2. [Continuing Effort] Recommend procedural changes that can support the mitigation of unconscious bias in the identification of candidates or their evaluation.
 - 3.3.3. [Annually] Compile and disseminate best practices for diversity and inclusion in leadership within AIAA groups/bodies (e.g., TCs)
 - 3.3.4. [Continuing Effort] Mentoring program for diverse members. The initial effort could be focused at young professional and local levels.
- 3.4. OBJECTIVE: Support the recognition and promotion of diverse members and groups that support and advocate diversity
 - 3.4.1. [Biannually] Create and administer an AIAA Diversity Award pursuant of existing AIAA Honors and Awards Committee governance and procedures
 - 3.4.2. [Continuing Effort] Mentor and support the nomination of diverse members for AIAA awards
 - 3.4.3. [Continuing Effort] Mentor and support the nomination of diverse members for AIAA member grade advancement
- 3.5. OBJECTIVE: Outreach diversity-focused entities
 - 3.5.1. [Continuing Effort] Support AIAA K–12 STEM efforts
 - 3.5.2. [At least 1 per year] Engage with major women’s and URM professional societies to share information and best practices and to attract new members
 - 3.5.3. [At least 1 per year] Engage with major aerospace entities (corporate members and industry, government and academia) that have diversity mechanisms to share best practices and lessons learned

Diversity Plan Authors

Below are the authors of this document. The goals that are put forward in the document come from the Institute.

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Appendix

The AIAA Diversity Working Group is currently organized as follows.

Diversity Working Group Chair: Susan Frost

Outreach Subgroup

Lead: Geeth Chettiar

This subgroup identifies and recommends academic, industry, government, and nonprofit organizations with which AIAA should formulate strategic partnerships. The objective is to combine resources and expertise to increase awareness and representation of our underrepresented constituencies.

Diversity Programming Subgroup

Lead: Hsiao-hua Burke

This subgroup identifies and develops programs that will provide education, awareness, support, and growth of diversity within AIAA. An initial goal is to organize events to promote diversity at key AIAA national conferences and forums. In addition to benefiting the general audience, these events will support women and underrepresented constituents in providing better networking opportunities.

Leadership, Growth, and Retention Subgroup

Lead: Hernando Jimenez

This subgroup identifies and develops opportunities that will foster leadership and growth of underrepresented constituencies and identify and develop opportunities that will encourage underrepresented constituencies to stay connected to AIAA.

Communications Subgroup

Lead: Brett Hoffstadt

This subgroup communicates with AIAA members, sponsors, and the public about diversity efforts within AIAA.