



AVIATION + ASCEND™

21–25 JULY 2025

22–24 JULY 2025

EVENT RECAP

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LOCKHEED MARTIN 

#AIAAaviation

#ascendspace



TO THE AIAA COMMUNITY

The positive vibes in Las Vegas at our 2025 AIAA AVIATION Forum and ASCEND event were palpable as the Institute’s members convened to learn about the latest innovations in aircraft, spacecraft, and advanced technologies that are propelling us forward. Thank you for your enthusiastic participation—your attendance and engagement ensure that our aerospace community continues breaking barriers.

By the Numbers

We hosted **nearly 2,700 aerospace professionals**, **268 technical sessions** including **1,300 technical presentations**, **over 300 speakers**, and **more than 50 exhibitors** at Caesars Forum. We were energized by the **600+ students** representing **46 countries** who joined us for special events including: Meet the Employers with **13 companies** engaging with approximately **nearly 200 job seekers**, and Speed Mentoring session with dozens of aerospace executives advising **120+ next generation leaders**.

Deep Tech

The deep technical exchange, a hallmark of AIAA events, continued with over **1,000 technical paper presentations** at the combined events. The Institute was honored to showcase so many outstanding authors from across the aeronautics and space domains. Of course, you’ll find them all in our world-leading Aerospace Research Central (ARC), along with over 200,000 peer-reviewed papers and journal articles. We were also able to recognize dozens of students with best paper awards during the AIAA AVIATION Forum, based on assessments by industry professionals.

Engagement

Our online and social media engagement efforts continue to add thousands of new followers and readers to AIAA’s community. Thanks to your support, we saw over **38K in video views** and reached over **174M people**. We shared valuable insights—from the quotes, photos, videos, and aerospace influencers who joined us in fabulous Las Vegas. Enjoy even more photos and videos in [AIAA’s Flickr album](#) and watch talks from the main stages on [AIAA’s YouTube channel](#). You can read stories and reporting about the events on [Aerospace America](#).

Recognition

Saving the best for last, we celebrated excellence with the **2025 David W. Thompson Lecture in Space Commerce** on savvy space policy, and the **2025 Wright Brothers Lecture in Aeronautics** on hybrid electric aircraft. Congratulations to our **11 award winners honored** at the Awards Recognition Ceremony, as well as the numerous professional best paper award winners.

I’d like to thank our Corporate Members, Corporate Partners, and other organizations who generously sponsored these events. Your contributions enable us to provide this invaluable opportunity for deep knowledge transfer, impressive technology advancement, and countless personal exchanges.

DC & San Diego in ‘26

AIAA will host coast-to-coast editions of ASCEND and AIAA AVIATION Forum in the spring of 2026. Planning is underway for both signature AIAA events. See you next year in our nation’s capital and sunny Southern California!

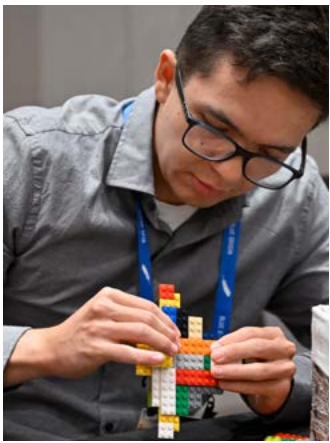
ASCEND

Washington, D.C., 19–21 May 2026

AIAA AVIATION Forum

San Diego, 8–12 June 2026

All the best,
Clay Mowry
CEO, AIAA





HIGHLIGHTS



AIAA AVIATION

- › Imagined a view of aviation in 2050, from new aircraft types, new propulsion systems, and the proliferation of AI/ML/autonomy
- › Rolled out the new Sustainable Aviation IOC, including six workshops
- › Reviewed recent incidents in aviation and the actions the community can take to ensure better safety and performance
- › Proposed future air traffic management systems to improve safety, performance, and efficiency
- › Examined the JetZero Blended-Wing-Body aircraft and the design of the X-59A
- › Shared insights on mapping out a technical career in large organizations
- › Outlined a combined vision for AI/ML/autonomy uses in the future military
- › Explored why AI will be beneficial for commercial aviation and how AI can be certified for flight



ASCEND

- › Held strategic discussions on advancing space innovation through public-private partnerships and international collaboration
- › Partnered with the ISS National Lab to showcase the ISS with a live astronaut connection and present ISSRDC content on microgravity research, global cooperation, and Commercial LEO Destinations (CLDs)
- › Explored national space strategy through sessions on cybersecurity, missile defense, policy frameworks, and innovation trade-offs
- › Spotlighted founders and investors driving the future of space through funding models, market strategies, and dual-use technologies
- › Discussed the role of AI, ML, and high-performance computing in space, including use cases, ethics, and transformative infrastructure
- › Addressed the development of critical lunar infrastructure—from landers and logistics to power and resource utilization—to enable sustained lunar exploration under Artemis and beyond
- › Delivered interactive workshops and professional development, including science communication, war games, and Astrodebates
- › Featured lightning talks and Op-Eds from the Ascendants cohort on space sustainability and environmentalism

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Plans are underway to enhance both AIAA AVIATION Forum and ASCEND for 2026, with a focus on deeper integration into their respective communities. 2026 ASCEND will take place in Washington, D.C., 19–21 May, and 2026 AIAA AVIATION Forum will be held in San Diego, 8–12 June. Hosting these events separately allows us to strategically position them in key hubs for facilitating better discovery, stronger connections, and greater opportunities for partnerships, innovation, and visibility.

2026 AIAA AVIATION Forum

AIAA AVIATION Forum is the only aviation event that covers the entire integrated spectrum of aviation business, research, development, and technology. In San Diego, a region with 900+ aerospace companies, AIAA AVIATION Forum serves as a platform to bring together the aviation industry to address challenges and future direction with a broad, integrating view of the aviation marketplace. Join the conversation and hear voices from defense, commercial aviation, and emerging technologies to foster cross-sector collaboration and innovation.

Charting the Course to 2026

Key topics for the 2026 forum will include:

- › Modernization of ATC System
- › Military Applications for AI
- › Hypersonics
- › Progress in AAM Certification
- › Advancing Digital Manufacturing
- › Advancing Supersonic Flight
- › Aircraft Electrification
- › Military Aviation

Extensive Technical Program

In addition to the core technical program, AIAA AVIATION Forum will feature a number of workshops and special programming, including:

- › Efficiency and Sustainability
- › Multi-Modal Transportation
- › Electrification
- › Electric Propulsion and Advanced Technologies Symposium (EPATS)

Innovation in Action

We are also working on exciting exhibits and activities for the forum, including:

- › The latest displays and experiences
- › Tech demos and innovative exhibits
- › Local Tours: Industry and U.S. Navy

2026 ASCEND

In Washington, DC, ASCEND takes the conversation to the next frontier—space commercialization, exploration, and policy.

With a unique draw for decision makers across government, private industry, and startups, ASCEND offers prime opportunities for strategic engagement. We're proud to collaborate with leading organizations to shape high-impact programming and expand our reach across the space community.

Premier Event Partner: Commercial Space Foundation

Together, we're delivering powerful programming and activations, including:

- › Insightful sessions on the policies and regulations shaping the future of space
- › Capitol Hill engagement through Congressional Visits Day
- › A celebration of commercial astronauts at the Spacefarers Reception, where awardees will receive their astronaut pins

Expanding National Security Space Engagement

We're deepening ASCEND's connections to the national security space community:

- › Space Force Association-led core sessions and featured speakers
- › Cross-sector showcases of Guardian collaboration
- › Classified Day at The Aerospace Corporation, 18 May in Chantilly, VA

Collaboration with ISS National Lab & CASIS

We're excited to welcome the International Space Station National Laboratory and CASIS to ASCEND. Looking ahead to 2026 ASCEND, we're building:

- › Integrated ISSRDC content within ASCEND programming
- › Connections between researchers, visionaries, and investors
- › A focus on space R&D and sustainable growth in low Earth orbit

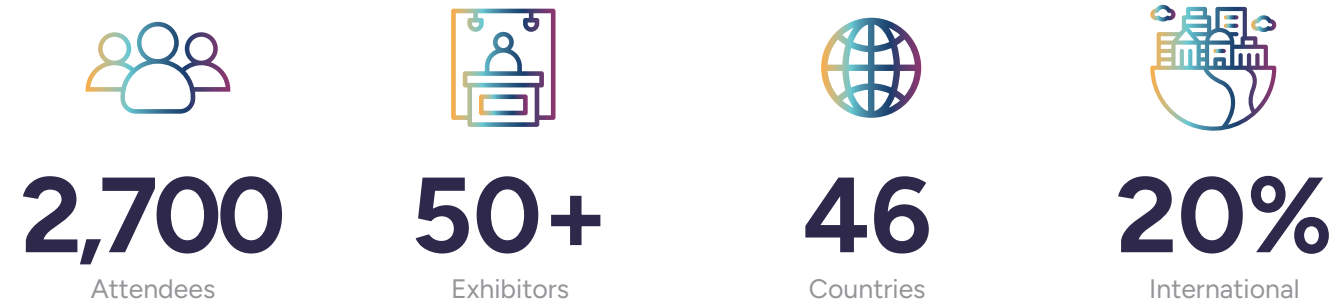
Young Professionals Programming: SGAC Joins ASCEND

We're also partnering with the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC)—the largest global network of students and young professionals in space.

- › Their flagship SGx event is moving to ASCEND
- › Featuring fast-paced, TEDx-style lightning talks
- › Creating new pathways for young talent to connect with industry and government leaders



COMMUNITY OF INNOVATORS



TECHNICAL SESSIONS

268

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

1,300

Top Companies/ Employers Represented:

Lockheed Martin

The Boeing Company

Northrop Grumman

The Aerospace Corp

RTX

Airbus

Top Colleges and Universities Represented:

Georgia Institute of Technology

Purdue University

University of Notre Dame

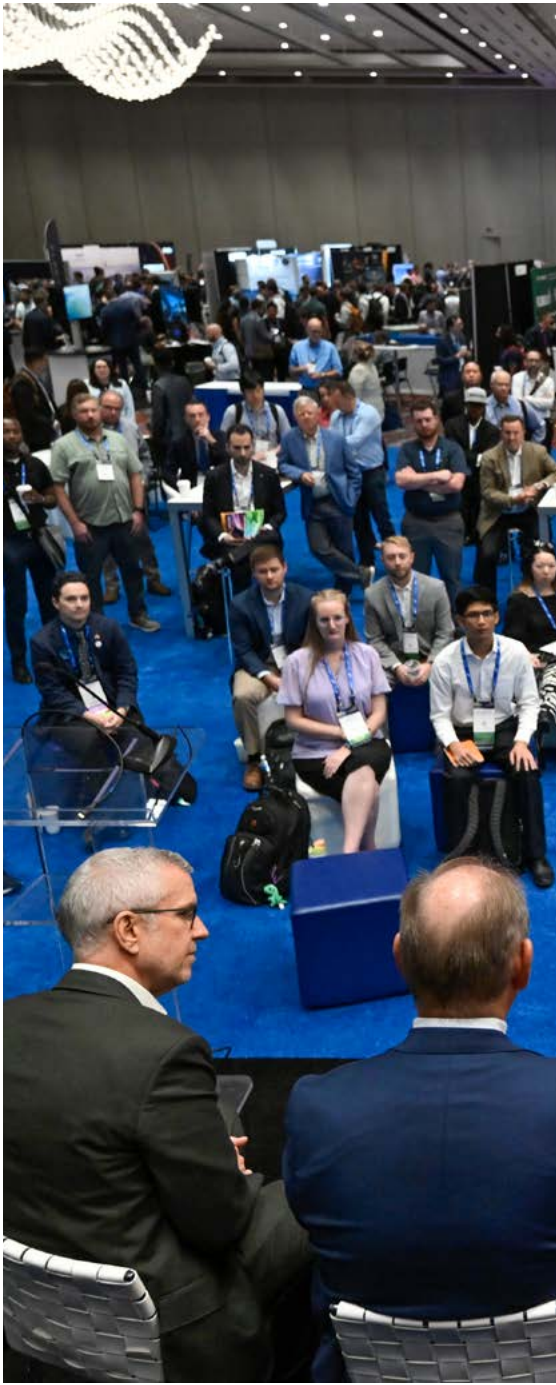
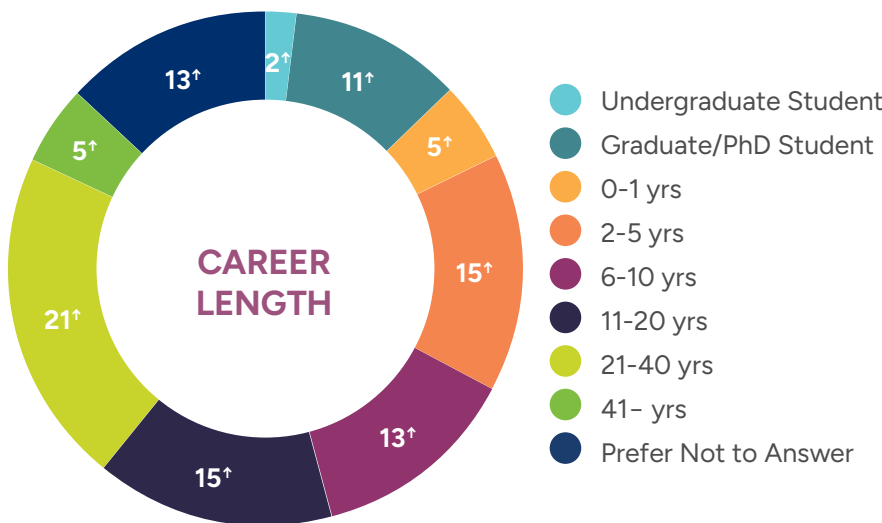
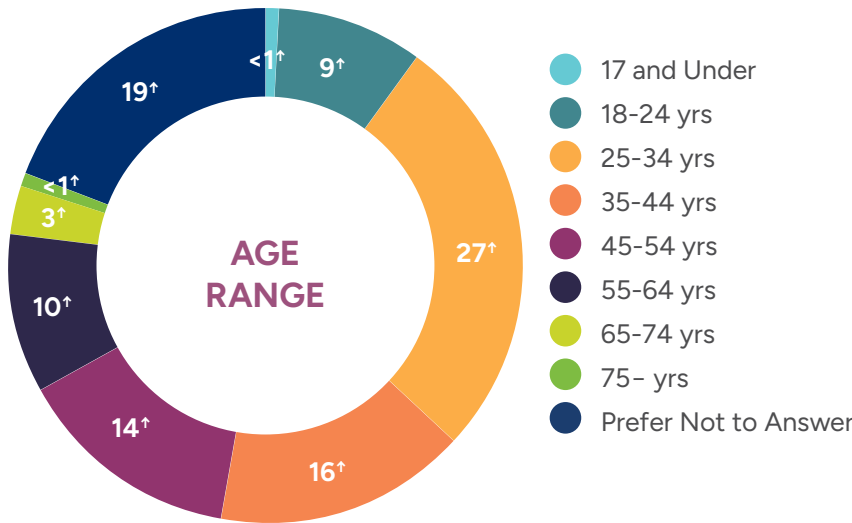
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Iowa State University

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS

INDUSTRY SECTOR





IMPACT & REACH



174M

Reach



23

Media Mentions



701

#ascendspace
#AIAAAviation



38K

Video Views



21

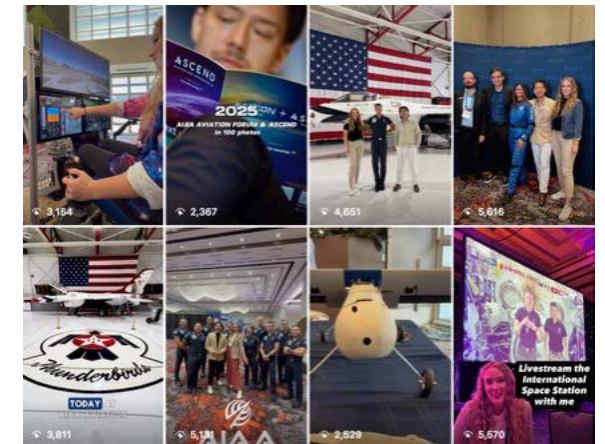
Credentialed Media



1.47K

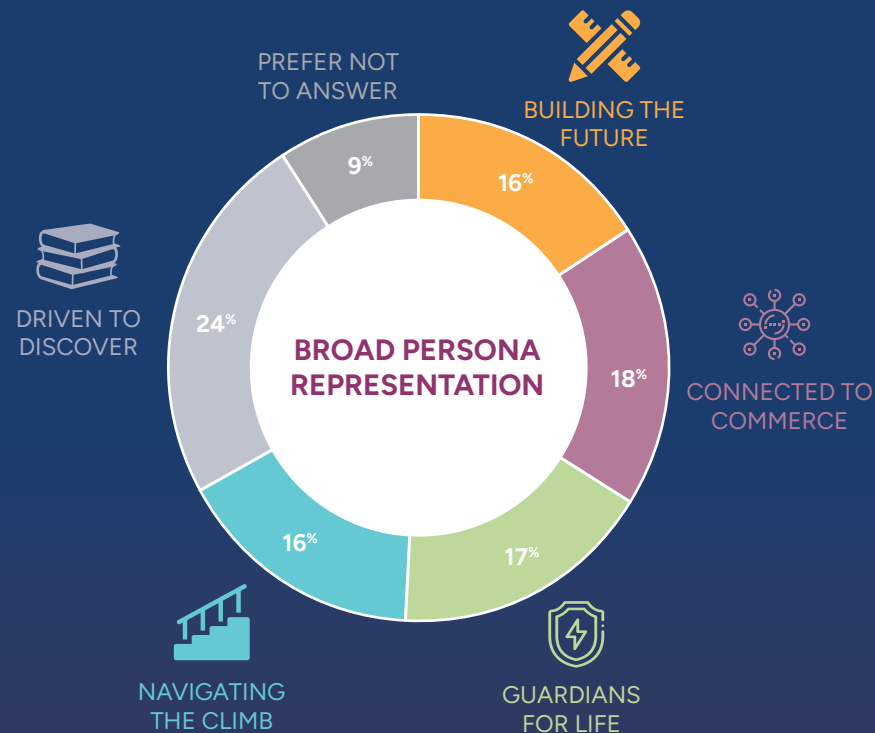
Social Media Audience Growth

Featured on Instagram



Social Media Influencer

Lauren Savage
@laurenthesavage



BUILDING THE FUTURE: Interested in tools and technology and eager to gain hands-on experience to solve problems or enhance career.

CONNECTED TO COMMERCE: Building strategic partnerships and connecting with fellow business people and policy leaders; selling a product or service with significant impact on the space economy.

DRIVEN TO DISCOVER: Lifelong learner and teacher; exploring the intersection of science and technology and developing the next big ideas in space.

GUARDIANS FOR LIFE: Years of experience building space programs that impact society, committed to investing in meaningful change.

NAVIGATING THE CLIMB: Long, ambitious career ahead, looking for a breadth of ideas, connections, and experiences that will launch to the next level.



Top Industry News Articles

Industry News Coverage

[Space Force Aims to Share Classified Threat Info with Industry](#), Air & Space Forces Magazine

[Space company IPOs may be outliers, not a trend](#) - SpaceNews

[Space Force Acquisition, Ops Units Team Up](#), Air & Space Forces Magazine

[Lockheed Martin may offer Orion as a commercial service](#) - SpaceNews

[Industry warns of severe consequences from ISS funding cuts](#) - SpaceNews

[SpaceOps: Business Model For Robotic Space Junk Removal Emerges](#) | Aviation Week Network

Industry Podcasts

[The evolution of multi-mission orbital vehicles](#) - SpaceNews

[Do NASA's Budget Cuts Spell Trouble For U.S. Aerospace? Mind The Gap!](#) | Aviation Week Network

[Mission to market - The evolution of NASA's CLPS program](#) - SpaceNews

[Navigating the shift to commercial space stations](#) - SpaceNews

Aerospace America Coverage

The *Aerospace America* reporting team published news throughout the events. Writers from the AIAA Communications team published stories to chronicle the events in the From the Institute section. All stories are available at aerospaceamerica.aiaa.org.

SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

AIAA would like to thank the following organizations for their support of the 2025 AIAA AVIATION Forum and 2025 ASCEND.

PREMIER SPONSOR



TOP SPONSORS



SUPPORTERS



EXHIBITOR HIGHLIGHTS



50
Exhibitors

	Ennova Technologies Inc	Research and Education (OAIRE)
	ESTECO	Radeus Labs, Inc.
	Flexcompute	Specialized Manufacturing
	General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc.	Taber Industries
	GKS Lifting and Moving Solutions, LLC	TechnoMile
Advanced Test Equipment Corp.	Glenair	Tec-Masters, Inc.
Aegis Aerospace	Gulfstream Aerospace	Tecplot
AIAA Los Angeles - Las Vegas Section	HEAD acoustics, Inc.	The Boeing Company
Airborne Systems	Heller Machine Tools	Toray Group
Altair	Higher Orbits	University of Central Florida
Ansys	IC2	University of Kansas Jayhawk Global
ARA	Image Systems	University of Southern California Viterbi School of Engineering
BQP	Kulite Semiconductor Products, Inc.	Valcor Engineering Corporation
Cadence	LESAR	ValveTech, Inc.
Calspan	Lockheed Martin	Volcano Platforms Inc.
Caltech CTME	Luminary Cloud, Inc.	Western Michigan University College of Engineering and Applied Sciences
Dassault Systemes SIMULIA	M4 Engineering, Inc.	ZEISS Industrial Quality Solutions
DEWESoft LLC	Metacomp Technologies, Inc.	Zero Hour Parts
dSPACE	Oklahoma Aerospace Institute for	
Enduralock		

THE HUB

The HUB stage delivered an exceptional lineup of engaging content. With 21 dynamic sessions, it drew strong attendance and positive feedback from both attendees and exhibitors. Exhibitors specifically praised the HUB for boosting traffic and adding significant value to their participation.

Content included:

- › A Day in the Life of the Thunderbird Crew
- › Harnessing Physics AI Models to Accelerate Concept Exploration and Design
- › United States Space Force Space Systems Command Front Door: Your Connection to the Space Force
- › Is Technical Fellow Your Destiny? A Discussion with Lockheed Martin Senior Fellows
- › 50 Years of Deep Space Exploration
- › Forging U.S.-Saudi Partnerships in the Saudi Aviation Sector
- › International Space Station MIMIC





ASCEND™

19–21 MAY 2026 | WASHINGTON, D.C.

ASCEND.EVENTS

FOUNDING SPONSOR

LOCKHEED MARTIN 

See you next year!

Interested in sponsoring or exhibiting at the 2026 events?

Reach out to our team!

ELIZABETH JUST

Sr. Manager,
Client Executive
and Sales Capture

Companies A–N
ElizabethJ@aiaa.org
–1 571.439.4672

BRIAN WILLIAMS

Manager,
Client Executive
and Sales Capture

Companies O–Z
BrianW@aiaa.org
–1 908.723.4613

VICKIE SINGER

Director, Revenue
Development

VickieS@aiaa.org
–1 443.629.9013

CHRIS SEMON

Director of Enterprise
Accounts:

Lockheed Martin,
The Boeing Company,
Northrop Grumman, RTX

ChrisS@aiaa.org
–1 703.599.8444



AVIATION

8–12 JUNE 2026 | SAN DIEGO, CA

AIAA.ORG/AVIATION