



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIAA Launches New STEM Education Initiative to Inspire Students to Consider Careers in Aerospace

SAN FRANCISCO – The American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) has announced the liftoff of Students To Launch, a new national science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education initiative to engage underserved, underrepresented students in the challenges, inspiration, and opportunities of spaceflight. The announcement was made at the 20th annual Dreamforce event during the “Inspiring Innovation at Light Speed” reception.

Students To Launch (S2L) invites students across the country to participate in NASA mission-inspired activities hosted by science centers, museums, and other informal, afterschool programs called S2L Hubs. Students who complete S2L activities at these hubs will be eligible for the full-scale experience of witnessing a space launch in person, traveling to NASA’s Kennedy Space Center (KSC) to learn about a wide spectrum of space missions, meeting aerospace professionals including astronauts, and imagining a future for themselves working in the space industry.

“The Students To Launch mission has lifted off and we couldn’t be more excited,” said Dan Dumbacher, AIAA Executive Director. “Students involved in this program are seeing for themselves the diverse opportunities and careers in the aerospace industry. This is confidence inspiring! They will be able to see themselves doing this kind of work soon, being an integral part of something that changes the world.”

The program is offered through a unique cooperation and collaboration between NASA, founding sponsor AIAA, Griffin Communications Group, First Light Ventures, and Oregon State University. The first Students To Launch experience piloted in August 2022 at the NASA Kennedy Space Center for the first Artemis I launch attempts, hosting 47 students and chaperones.

“AIAA is excited to play a role in helping NASA engage students from underserved, underrepresented communities,” adds Dumbacher. “Giving students opportunities to discover their passions and explore career paths in aerospace and other STEM fields is a priority for us. AIAA is proud to be the founding sponsor of Students To Launch. We invite all industries to be part of this exciting new STEM education initiative.”

Students To Launch employs a multi-faceted approach to engaging students to witness and celebrate the triumphs and challenges of spaceflight. Short videos led by explorer and television host Josh Bernstein (known as “Commander Josh”) introduce students to real-life

subject matter experts working on the frontlines of NASA missions. Hands-on activities invite students to complete their own NASA-inspired projects. Finally, special opportunities to meet astronauts and other industry experts, as well as live launch watch parties, both virtual and in person, involve students in the inspiring atmosphere of space launches.

“NASA and AIAA share a commitment to inspire students from all across the country to learn about the agency’s exciting missions and the importance of STEM ,” says Mike Kincaid, associate administrator in NASA’s Office of STEM Engagement. “NASA has bold, long-term goals, so it’s critically important that we reach students in today’s classrooms- the Artemis Generation- to keep exploring and pushing the boundaries space exploration.”

Students To Launch has led experiences with students in Florida, Montana, and Texas in recent months, including the two-day launch experience at the Kennedy Space Center around the Artemis I launch attempts. The next in-person experience is planned for the Crew-5 launch in early October. The program also is launching a robust website as well as a dynamic and interactive virtual launch experience at studentstolaunch.org in 2023.

About AIAA

The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) is the world’s largest aerospace technical society. With nearly 30,000 individual members from 91 countries, and 100 corporate members, AIAA brings together industry, academia, and government to advance engineering and science in aviation, space, and defense. For more information, visit www.aiaa.org, and follow AIAA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Instagram](#).

About Students To Launch

The mission of Students To Launch is to inspire students from communities across the U.S. to develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and goals of spaceflight missions and, in doing so, discover passions that can lead to the possibility of a career in aerospace and astronautics. Follow Students To Launch on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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