

Exploring New Horizons: Supporting Future Engineers in the Georgia Tech Community and Beyond

Isabelle Pinto¹ and Rishita Mhatre²

Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA, 30332, United States of America

I. Summary

In the 2025-2026 school year, GT-AIAA has aimed to broaden offerings to the students in the Aerospace Engineering department, aiding them as they grow in leadership and as young professionals. These offerings include heritage programs, such as the student conference committee, case studies, and informational sessions with recruiters. In addition, GT-AIAA has added new initiatives, including the first AE Hackathon at Georgia Tech, an outreach committee, and alumni panels. By implementing new and broader opportunities for Aerospace Engineering students at Georgia Tech, GT-AIAA hopes to strengthen the abilities of the next generation of aerospace professionals as they take on the ever evolving challenges of our field.

A flagship event for GT-AIAA this year was the first annual AE Hackathon. Traditionally, hackathons are events where students, typically in computer science related fields, have the opportunity to form teams and apply their knowledge towards real world problems over the course of a few days. The executive board recognized that this was a gap for aerospace students at Georgia Tech and chose to recreate the opportunity with a focus on preeminent concerns in the field of aerospace. The AE hackathon tasked students to design a novel approach for facilitating lunar exploration. Participants formed teams, developed their proposals, and had the opportunity to manufacture basic prototypes using an on-campus maker space. Finally, teams presented and defended their solutions in front of industry professionals and school faculty. This experience taught participants teamwork, critical thinking under a time constraint, and public speaking, all soft skills valued in industry.

Other key events the executive board initiated this year were the Alumni Panels. The Mentors in Residence Panel facilitated the connection between our chapter and Georgia Tech AE alumni in the form of a panel where the board invited speakers from GE Aerospace, Blue Origin, and Amazon Kuiper to speak to our students about their experiences in industry. After the event, students had meaningful conversations with mentors about career progression and advice for future endeavors. Later, GT-AIAA held an International Student Panel in collaboration with the AE Graduate Students Association. Alumni and volunteers from all over the world tuned in to give advice to international students on presenting themselves, finding jobs, and navigating restrictions. Because a significant portion of AIAA members at Georgia Tech are from other countries, GT-AIAA wanted to host events dedicated to their concerns.

This year, however, was more than just events for the members of the Georgia-Tech AIAA chapter. AIAA is driven by a mission to serve and build the community. To that end, this year, GT-AIAA launched the Outreach Committee, an opportunity for student members to volunteer at events with high school and middle school students. During the semester, outreach committee members developed educational activities to introduce kids to early concepts of aerospace engineering, such as lift and aerodynamics. They also volunteered regularly at science events in Atlanta!

In the end, through a combination of successful heritage events and bold new initiatives, Georgia Tech AIAA is taking steps to prepare our members for an exciting future in the field of aerospace. After graduating, they will be competent, capable leaders with strong connections to their community.

¹ Undergraduate Student, Department of Aerospace Engineering, AIAA Student Member, 1584511

² Undergraduate Student, Department of Aerospace Engineering, AIAA Student Member, 1537138