

AVIATION

8-12 JUNE 2026 | SAN DIEGO, CA

EVENT RECAP



THANK YOU

San Diego was the perfect setting for AIAA AVIATION Forum 2026! It's a city that is critical to the history and the future of aviation. During the week, our community heard about aviation's progress and addressed its biggest challenges.

Innovation is moving with speed, scale, and urgency during this time of significant transformation in aviation. The theme for the week: **"From Velocity to Altitude — Accelerating Toward Tomorrow"** was evident in every speaker's remarks. They recognized that the challenges ahead are too important, the opportunities too significant, and the competition too intense for us to move at yesterday's pace.

Our plenary speakers underscored the "need for speed" theme: from Embraer describing the engineer of tomorrow, to Lockheed Martin addressing the hype and reality of AI, to the U.S. Navy sharing its insights into the aerospace lifecycle, to Boom bringing back supersonic flight, and finally to Penn State University helping us rethink the human-autonomy team architecture. The Forum 360 sessions took the discussions deeper every day. This report shares the impact of these high-level remarks, along with the technical paper presentations and the dynamic displays in the Expo Hall.

By the numbers, AIAA AVIATION Forum 2026 delivered a quality experience to our audience. We welcomed nearly 2,000 attendees, including 493 students, who represent the future of aerospace. With 52 exhibitors in the Expo Hall, 791 technical presentations, and participation from 35% of our Corporate Members, the event demonstrated the commitment of our community.

We were honored to present the **2026 AIAA Reed Aeronautics Award** to the Boom Supersonic XB-1 Team, as well as the **2026 Daniel Guggenheim Medal** to Charbel Farhat, Vivian Church Hoff Professor of Aircraft Structures School of Engineering, Stanford University. We also celebrated excellence at the **Awards Recognition Ceremony**, presenting the **2026 AIAA Aerodynamics Award**, the **2026 AIAA Ground Testing Award**, **2026 AIAA Hap Arnold Award for Excellence in Aeronautical Program Management**, the **2026 AIAA Multidisciplinary Design Optimization Award**, the **2026 AIAA Plasmadynamics and Lasers Award**, the **2026 AIAA Thermophysics Award**, and best papers from the previous year.

We are grateful to the members of the Guiding Coalition and Technical Program Committee. Your leadership made this event remarkable. Additionally, support from our sponsors enables aerospace knowledge exchange and advances the entire AIAA community – thank you!

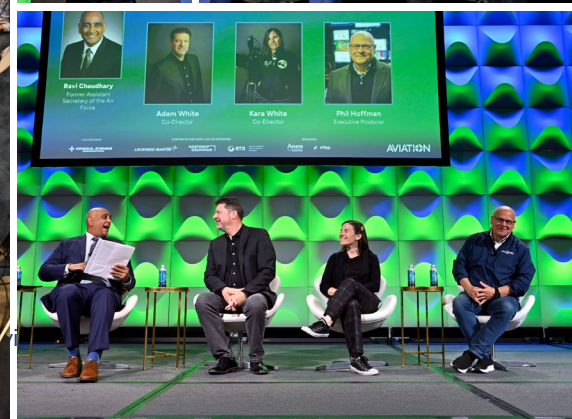
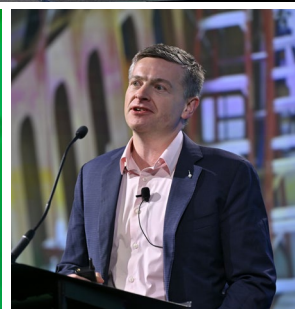
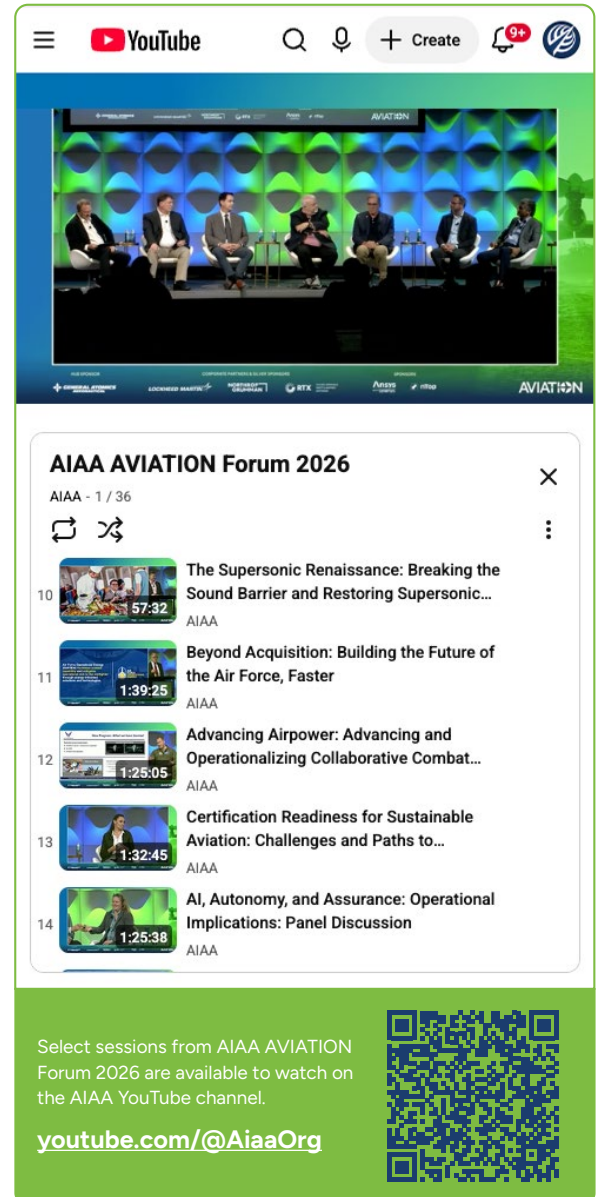
Please enjoy this summary of the AIAA AVIATION Forum 2026. Let's continue the conversations we began at the forum. We look forward to seeing you in San Diego again next year.

Clay Mowry
AIAA CEO



2026 HIGHLIGHTS

- › The Forum 360 sessions started by asking, **“What problem are we solving?”** and provided tools and ideas for the Engineer of Tomorrow.
- › We explored the use of AI, examining whether it is more than hype and its potential to transform aviation.
- › The FAA Deputy Administrator Chris Rocheleau and NASA Senior Advisor Todd Ericson had a lively discussion about the future of aviation and the role their organizations are expected to play.
- › VADM Douglas “V8” Verissimo, Commander of Naval Air Forces, delivered an insightful and informative plenary on mobility and reliability.
- › Blake Scholl, CEO of Boom Supersonic, accepted the Reed Aeronautics Award on behalf of the Boom XB-1 team, delivered an inspiring plenary, and generously spent time mentoring students.
- › NASA Aeronautics leadership provided updates on current projects, and AIAA recognized Bob Pearce for over 40 years of service.
- › The H2-Aero Symposium was co-located with the forum and partnered with the Sustainability IOC to produce a two-day program on hydrogen in aviation.
- › The newly renamed EPATS (formerly EATS) program featured three days of content to advance electric propulsion in aviation.
- › The NASA X-59 team offered an inside look at the program during two sessions.
- › The NASA AACES 2050 shared progress reports on multiple aspects of the program.
- › Attendees also enjoyed a special preview of an upcoming documentary on NASA’s Voyager missions.



THE FORUM BY THE NUMBERS



2,014
Attendees



52
Exhibitors

35
Countries



21%
International



239
Technical Sessions



791
Paper Presentations

Most Popular Topics:

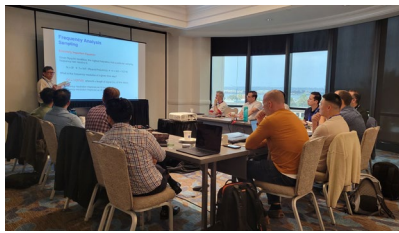
Air Transportation
Systems

Aircraft
Design

Applied
Aerodynamics

Fluid
Dynamics

Multidisciplinary Design
Optimization



138
Course & Workshop
Participants

Courses & Workshops Offered:

- › Propeller Aerodynamics for Advanced Air Mobility: Fundamentals and Integration Effects
- › Hypersonic Aerothermodynamics
- › Computational Aeroelasticity
- › Design of Electrified Propulsion Aircraft
- › AIAA Drag Prediction and Aeroelastic Prediction Workshop
- › 3rd AIAA Workshop on Multifidelity Methods for Design and Uncertainty Quantification

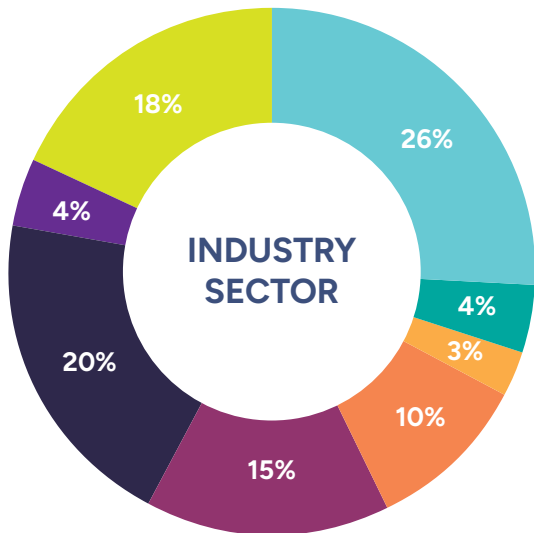
Corporate Organizations with the Largest Representation:

The Boeing Company
NASA
Lockheed Martin
General Atomics Aeronautical Systems
Northrop Grumman
RTX

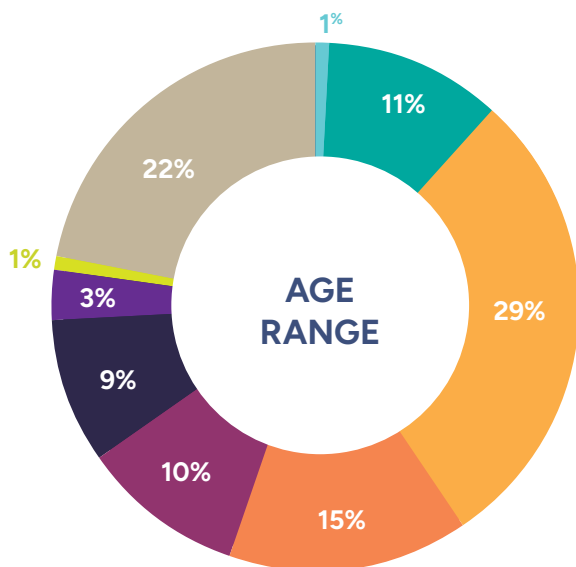
Colleges and Universities with the Largest Representation:

Georgia Institute of Technology
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
University of Michigan
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

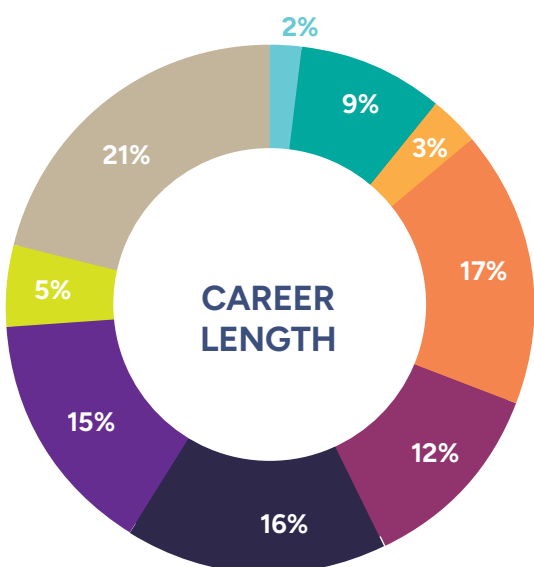
AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS



- Academia/Researcher
- Adjacent Industry
- Consulting
- Government & Military
- Manufacturing
- Student
- Suppliers
- Others



- 17 and Under
- 18-24 yrs
- 25-34 yrs
- 35-44 yrs
- 45-54 yrs
- 55-64 yrs
- 65-74 yrs
- 75+ yrs
- Prefer Not to Answer



- Undergraduate Student
- Graduate/PhD Student
- 0-1 yrs
- 2-5 yrs
- 6-10 yrs
- 11-20 yrs
- 21-40 yrs
- 41+ yrs
- Prefer Not to Answer



CHARTING THE COURSE TO 2027

Key topics will include:

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

Extensive Technical Program

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

- › Use of AI, Autonomy and Digitization
- › Efficiency and Sustainability
- › Multi-Modal Transportation

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



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IMPACT & REACH



426K
Overall Reach



1,168
Social Media
Audience Growth



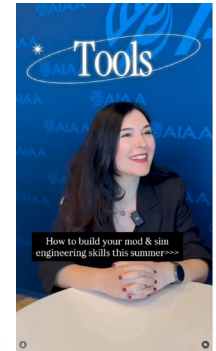
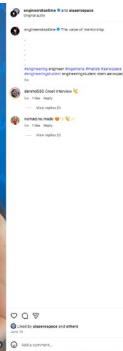
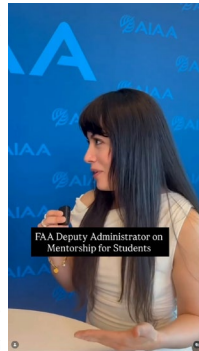
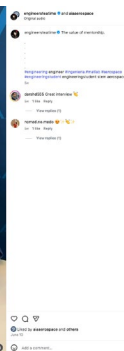
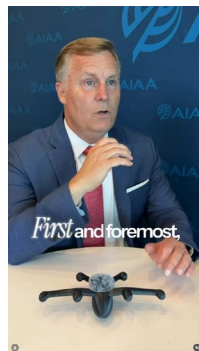
103,426
Video Views

Social Media Influencer

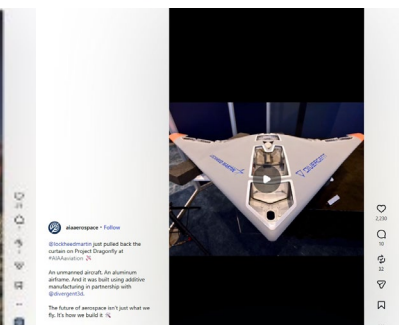
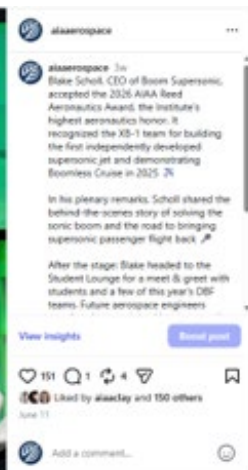


MEL
@engineersteatime

AIAA partnered with @engineersteatime to expand the event's reach through Instagram Reels, real-time IG Stories coverage, and a feature on engineersteatime.com. This collaboration brought authentic, on-the-ground storytelling to Mel's engaged aerospace community, boosting visibility for the forum beyond the show floor.



Featured on Instagram



MEDIA

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AVIATION 2026

2026 NEWS

AUTONOMOUS AIRCRAFT
Keep pilots engaged and make autonomy 'subordinate,' professor says
BY PAUL BRINKMANN — JUNE 12, 2026

AVIATION 2026
Boom Supersonic targeting late 2027 for first deliveries of ground turbines, CEO says
BY PAUL BRINKMANN — JUNE 11, 2026

AVIATION 2026
AACES 2050 research prompts NASA to pursue LNG for aviation turbines, CEO says
BY PAUL BRINKMANN — JUNE 11, 2026

AVIATION 2026
Anduril readies to demonstrate CCA's 'manned-unmanned teaming'
BY MARJORIE CENSER — JUNE 11, 2026

AIRCRAFT PROPULSION
Test time for this hybrid-electric engine concept
BY KEITH BUTTON — JUNE 11, 2026

AVIATION 2026
Full C-17 fleet to use 3D-printed drag reduction fins within a year, U.S. Air Force official says
BY MARJORIE CENSER — JUNE 10, 2026

AVIATION 2026
NASA X-59 pilots prepare for next phase: producing a sonic 'thump'
BY PAUL BRINKMANN — JUNE 10, 2026

AIRCRAFT PROPULSION
With UltraFan design, Rolls-Royce is betting turbofan has further to go
BY CHARLOTTE RYAN — JUNE 10, 2026

ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY
FAA 'working through' process to allow cargo, potential passenger flights under eLPP, official says
BY PAUL BRINKMANN — JUNE 9, 2026

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.

Stories and videos are available here:
AIAA AVIATION coverage -
[Aerospace America.](#)



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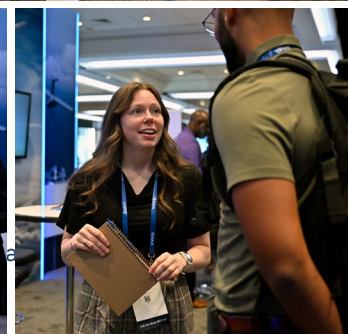
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Private meeting rooms
available for 2027

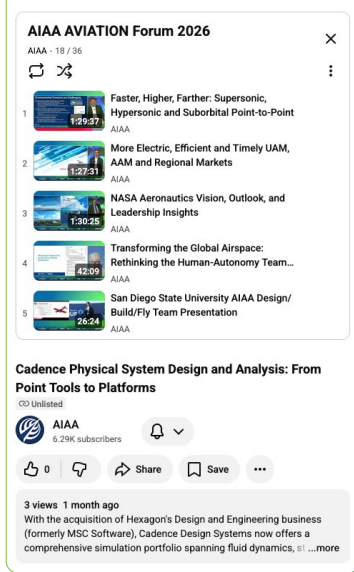
Inquire at salesinfo@aiaa.org



The HUB stage anchored the Expo Hall with 16 sessions across three days (9–11 June). Lockheed Martin Skunk Works and Divergent headlined with Project Dragonfly, an additively manufactured unmanned aircraft, alongside General Atomics on Launched Effects, RTX on electrified propulsion, and Aurora/Boeing on 2050 commercial aircraft concepts from its NASA AACES work.

The dominant theme was AI and high-fidelity simulation in aircraft design, led by Luminary CTO and co-founder Juan Alonso on trustworthy physics AI, with sessions on machine vision for mesh generation, geometry intelligence, and Cadence's move from point tools to platforms. The program also gave a national stage to three university Design/Build/Fly teams (San Diego State, UCLA, USC) and closed with an all-attendee Paper Airplane Competition that packed the floor on the final day.

HUB sessions from
**AIAA AVIATION FORUM
2026** are available
to watch on the
[AIAA YouTube channel](#).



AVIATION

7-11 JUNE 2027 | SAN DIEGO, CA



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