Daniel L. Dumbacher

Dan Dumbacher is the Executive Director of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA). He assumed this role in January 2018. AIAA is the professional technical society for the aerospace industry, whose approximately 30,000 members comprise the scientists, engineers, and technical workforce that design, build, and operate the complex systems in the aviation and space sectors. The organization also has 100 corporate members, both large and small, representing a cross section of the aerospace and defense industry. The Institute curates the technical knowledge for the industry in the form of peer-reviewed journals and several annual forums for technical exchange. AIAA is also very involved in advocacy and education of policymakers, as well as workforce development and mentoring for the aerospace community.

Before joining AIAA, Dumbacher was a professor of Engineering Practice in the School of Aeronautics and Astronautics at Purdue University, where he taught courses in systems thinking, systems engineering, and space policy.

Prior to joining the faculty at Purdue, Dumbacher served as the deputy associate administrator, Exploration Systems Development Division, Human Exploration and Operations Mission Directorate at NASA Headquarters. In that capacity, he provided leadership and management as the program director for Exploration Systems Development, which included: the Space Launch System, Orion, and Ground Systems Development and Operations development and integration efforts. He led a national team of over 5,000, spanning all NASA centers and industry, and was responsible for a $3 billion annual budget.

From 2007 to 2010, Dumbacher served as the director of the Engineering Directorate at NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, leading 1,400 civil service and 1,200 support contractor employees. Under his leadership, the Engineering Directorate supported the Space Shuttle propulsion elements, design and development of the Ares launch vehicles, operation of NASA's Payload Operations Center—the command post for scientific research activities on board the International Space Station—and supported all Marshall Space Flight Center International Space Station and Science missions.

Previously, Dumbacher was deputy director of the Ares Projects Office and, prior to that, was deputy director for Product Assurance in the Safety and Mission Assurance Office, focusing on Space Shuttle return-to-flight efforts. He served as the deputy manager of the Space Launch Initiative Program and as the program manager of the Second Generation Reusable Launch Vehicle Program. He was the deputy manager of the X-33 Flight Vehicle Program and manager of the Delta Clipper Experimental Advanced Flight Vehicle Project. He also served as assistant manager of the Space Shuttle Main Engine Project and manager of the Technology Test Bed Project, overseeing hot-fire testing of large liquid propulsion engines.

Dumbacher has significant experience with the Department of Defense space community. In 2003 and 2004, he served as manager of the X-37 Flight Demonstrator, including joint program proposal evaluation with the U.S. Air Force and transitioning the X-37 project to the service branch. In 2002, Dumbacher was the NASA co-lead on the "120 Day Study" with the U.S. Air Force on launch vehicle development and systems technology joint efforts. In addition, as part of his duties, Dumbacher participated with the U.S. Air Force on technology joint projects and briefed senior Air Force and NASA leadership on strategy and progress.

Dumbacher earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Purdue University and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Alabama in Huntsville. He has also completed the Senior Managers in Government program at Harvard University.