

Section Chair Road Trip to Student Branches

Kurt Polzin

Our student branches are thriving, representing not only a source of great Section pride but also serving as one of our largest segments of membership growth. The Chair feels it is important that the professional membership of the Section make every effort possible to reach out to the branches and include them in Section activities. This is a challenge for a Section as geographically dispersed as ours, with a majority of the student branch members residing at least several hours outside of Huntsville.

To reach out to the branches, I completed a three-school swing visiting with students and faculty at the University of Alabama in Birmingham (UAB), Tuskegee University, and Auburn University in early November. Joining me for the latter two visits was the Section's Liaison to Student Branches Neal Allgood.

The Section does not presently have a student branch at UAB, but we are encouraging students and faculty there to start a new branch within the engineering school. The discussion in Birmingham focused on the benefits of being members of AIAA and the general nuts and bolts of how a branch is formed within the Section.

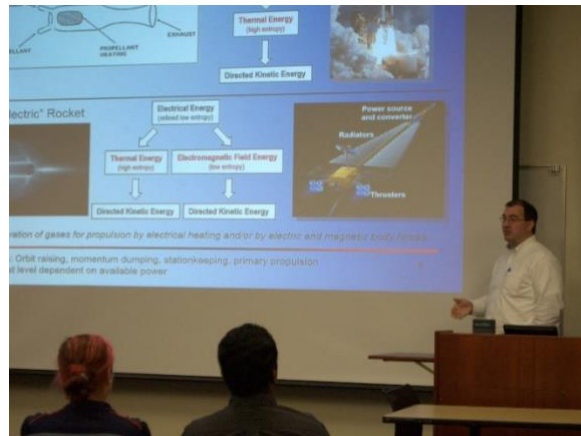
At Tuskegee University (winning the award for sharpest custom AIAA shirts), we discussed activities that the branch could undertake and how they could reach out to other engineering disciplines to further grow membership. It was a great opportunity to not only provide specific advice to the branch but to also hear some of their ideas on Section activities in which the students would like to be included.

In the final visit at Auburn University, we were greeted by a large group of students who came to talk about their branch and hear a research seminar. The seminar and ensuing question and answer session were a lot of fun and I additionally enjoyed hearing about all the branch activities and the accolades garnered by current and recent Auburn students and faculty members.

A very special thanks goes to Profs. Roy Koomullil (UAB), Javed Khan (Tuskegee), and Joseph Majdalani (Auburn) for hosting these visits, and to the students and faculty that came to meet and discuss AIAA at all three institutions.



Kurt Polzin (Chair) and Neal Allgood (Liaison to Student Branches) with Tuskegee University Branch Members.



(Left) group photo at Auburn University. (Right) Dr. Polzin giving a seminar on his research in electric propulsion.



Kurt Polzin with Auburn University Faculty Advisor Prof. Joseph Majdalani.