

Dr. Jennifer Rhatigan is an aerospace professional recognized for her leadership and personal contributions in advancing technology in spaceflight for exploration, research and defense. Her 38-year career in the profession is marked by creative and unique contributions in the design, development, and operations of complex aerospace systems. She served 25 years with NASA, notably on the early design of the International Space Station (ISS) through the bulk of its construction, and on the start-up of NASA's Constellation Program, taking the next step in human space exploration with the development of the Orion spacecraft and the Space Launch System (SLS). She currently advises and instructs early to mid-career Naval officers as Professor of the Practice, Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, at the U. S. Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) in Monterey, CA.

Dr. Rhatigan arrived at NPS via agency-wide competition for the NASA Chair Professorship. In that role, she modernized and delivered graduate-level courses in spacecraft design. She successfully developed and implemented a course in Combustion that is now a regular offering via campus and distance-learning.

Dr. Rhatigan was recruited as an original team member for the Constellation Program, where she created and established foundational approaches that survived that program's cancellation and continue to flourish under NASA's new human exploration programs. She formed and led the International Objectives Working Group of 10 participating space agencies to establish goals and objectives for a reference human lunar exploration architecture. These have subsequently been used by partner agency governments to align with NASA on human exploration. She formed and led a 10-Center team in development of the Constellation Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. At its completion, this was the most comprehensive EIS in NASA history, and completed on budget and ahead of schedule. She assured the adoption of this work for the follow-on SLS and Orion programs, saving millions of dollars.

Dr. Rhatigan started her NASA career as a power system engineer on the ISS at NASA Glenn and held increasingly responsible positions in the ISS program as it evolved. She managed the Fluids and Combustion Facility which has flawlessly operated in the US laboratory module since 2008. She then managed all of the facility payload development efforts from NASA Johnson; and formed and managed the ISS Science Office, serving as the first Deputy Program Scientist.

Through her distinguished career, Dr. Rhatigan has been known across the aerospace community for her passion in encouraging the next generation of engineers and scientists. In addition to earning the highest ratings from the Naval officers she advises and instructs, she is a regular mentor and judge, most recently at an AIAA student conference. She is chapter advisor for her sorority at the STEM-focused UC-Merced campus in the under-served Central Valley of California. She currently holds the rank of Associate Fellow of the AIAA.

Dr. Rhatigan is the author of more than 40 peer-reviewed publications and holds a professional engineer's license in the State of Florida. She began her career in a hard hat, designing steam power plant upgrades with an engineering firm in her hometown of Jacksonville, FL.