



Mechanical Engineering
Academy of Distinguished Alumni

Gregory N. Smith

Distinguished Mechanical Engineering, 2020

BSME, The University of Texas at Austin, 1985
MS Industrial Engineering, University of Houston, 1999
McCombs School of Business Executive Education
Program, The University of Texas at Austin, 2010

*Flight Operations Integration Lead, Human Lander
System*
NASA Johnson Space Center

Greg was born in Austin into the Longhorn family of Pam and Ned Smith. He grew up in Longview, Texas and developed a passion for mathematics and problem solving, which he shares with his father and brother, Stephen, who are also UT mechanical engineering graduates. Since graduating UT, Greg has applied a strategic, innovative, and collaborative approach in NASA Flight Operations across the Space Shuttle, International Space Station, Commercial Crew, Orion, Lunar Gateway, and Human Lander programs.

Greg started his career with Rockwell International at the NASA Johnson Space Center (JSC) in the Flight Operations Directorate (FOD). He worked as a mission planner for 29 Space Shuttle missions in Mission Control Center (MCC) Houston. He was the lead planner for five complex missions and received the highest honor to “Hang the Mission Plaque” on the MCC wall for two of his lead missions. In 2000, Greg was selected as a NASA civil servant and transitioned to the International Space Station (ISS) Program as an Operations Lead, responsible for integrating daily flight control activities and serving as a prime interface between the US and Russian program management during four tours of duty in Moscow, Russia.

In 2005, Greg was promoted to lead a new Flight Operations Management Office responsible for strategic planning, risk management, and business processes. In 2008, Greg became an Extra-Vehicular Activity (EVA) Hardware Manager and led the development and delivery of flight hardware to conduct spacewalks, including critical equipment for the Hubble Space Telescope repair mission. In 2013, Greg transitioned to lead the Environmental Systems

Group and directed the flight control team supporting the development and operations of life support and thermal systems for the Orion and Boeing Starliner vehicles. In 2018, Greg was selected as the Flight Operations Lead for the Lunar Gateway Program and a year later transitioned to a similar position for the Human Lander System Program. Greg was responsible for leading a team of astronauts and flight controllers in the formulation of NASA’s initiative to return humans to the moon.

Greg’s intellectual curiosity has resulted in several innovations for Flight Operations. He was a leader in the transformation of mission operational products from print to electronic media, including the development of the first web application in MCC and the Russian Segment Knowledge Base application to manage over 20 years of ISS space systems history. He received the JSC Exceptional Software Award. Greg has also served on the JSC team managing a technology investment portfolio and guided the formulation of multiple projects, including advancements in robotics and automation. The NASA astronaut corps presented Greg with the prestigious Space Flight Awareness Silver Snoopy Award, which honors individuals who have made significant contributions to the success of human spaceflight missions.

He lives in Friendswood with his wife, Chris, and children, Kathryn, Matthew, and Stephani. Greg has served the community in youth athletics as a coach and board member. His hobbies include spending time with his family and in numerous outdoor activities.