

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
LIFT OFF - PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SPACE EDUCATION (1)

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THE UNITED SPACE SCHOOL – A PROVEN APPROACH TO SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

Abstract

The global space industry is evolving with the influx of Generation Y. It is these folks, inspired by the Space Shuttle, Galileo, and X-Prize that will lead a new era in space exploration. How best to tap into this wide talent pool than by introducing them to the multidisciplinary nature of the space industry in early adolescence? For 15 years, the United Space School (USS) program has brought together the brightest students between the ages of 16-20 in Houston, Texas, USA for a 2-week summer academic and cultural introduction to space science, technology exploration. Operated by the Foundation for International Space Education (FISE) (501c3) in collaboration with the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL), University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) and NASA's Johnson Space Center, over 300 students from 25+ nations have been inspired and educated by way of USS. This paper seeks to provide an overview of the United Space School's objectives and aims, history, operational structure, lessons learned, future developments and the status of its current global network in partnership with the International Space School Alumni Association (ISSA). The authors produce this manuscript with an aim that other organizations with similar programs in existence may wish to collaborate, adopt or develop new methodologies to educate the next wave of future space professionals. Furthermore, the authors aspire to highlight substantial programs that support international space education.