

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
In Orbit - Postgraduate Space Education (4)

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TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF SPACE EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

Abstract

During the academic year 2012-13, the Department of Space Studies at the University of North Dakota celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Department of Space Studies (www.space.edu) and its Master of Science Program.

The department was established in 1986 with the help of Buzz Aldrin, and the first batch of M.S students were admitted in 1987. Since then the UND's M.S in Space Studies has grown to be a leading program in the world, offering a broad-based, interdisciplinary education in space studies encompassing space engineering, sciences, policy, commerce and law. Nearly 700 of our M.S graduates are successfully employed in NASA, the private space industry, and the military. Furthermore, in fall 2012, the 25th anniversary year of the department, a Ph.D. program in Aerospace Sciences was established in collaboration with the Department of Aviation. A joint undergraduate degree program in Aerospace Engineering, between the Space Studies Department and Department of Mechanical Engineering, is under approval by the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education for a potential start in fall 2013. The paper will outline these new developments and other future plans. Besides its unique, integrated, multidisciplinary curriculum in space studies, the Department of Space Studies has been offering courses through both traditional campus classes as well as online methods attracting high quality part time students, primarily working professionals from the space industry who bring in a wealth of practical experience and knowledge to the class room, enhancing the peer learning process.

In addition to the funding from the State of North Dakota, the program has benefited greatly through competitive research funding from NASA and other US federal agencies. The department is also home to the North Dakota Space Grant Consortium as well as the North Dakota NASA EPSCoR Program which enhances the research funding opportunities for faculty and students.