Robert N. Saunders, PhD

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OBJECTIVE – My objective is to become a DoD/IC leader in the maturing and transitioning of advanced capabilities across the technology development "valley of death".

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Industrial Engineering, Texas A&M University
Certificate in Applied Statistics, Statistics, Texas A&M University
Master of Science, Aerospace Engineering, Texas A&M University
Bachelor of Science, Aerospace Engineering, Virginia Tech

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Deputy Branch Chief, Launch Management Division   Sept 2023 – Present
Mission Manager, Launch Management Division   Feb 2023 – Sept 2023
Office of Space Launch, National Reconnaissance Office

- Lead/supervisor a team of civilian, military, and contractor support staff to acquire and deliver future launch solutions and offer flexible/tailorable launch support services.
- Identify, research, develop, and transition advanced launch and on-orbit capabilities via FAR and non-FAR based acquisitions.
- Facilitate and coordinate internal and external strategic outreach with industry and government partners to identify and program for customer requirements.
- Execute non-NSSL missions through partnerships and procurement of small launch vehicles.
- Coordinate inputs from stakeholders and track progress for the program, planning, budgeting, and execution (PPBE) process.

Mechanical Engineer, U.S. Naval Research Laboratory (NRL)   Sept 2016 – Feb 2023
Biomechanics Engineer, Leidos Inc. c\o NRL   June 2015 – Sept 2016

- Machine learning to emulate simulations in the metal additive manufacturing process.
- Development of strategies to understand, prevent, and protect Warfighters from injuries due to blast, blunt, and directed energy events.

Summer Scholar, U.S. Air Force Research Laboratory   May 2014 – Aug 2014

- Design and construction of a deployable tensioned helical structure using composites.

Graduate Research Assistant, Texas A&M University   Aug 2013 – May 2015

- Design, simulation, and optimization of shape memory alloy-based structures.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Reviewer for multiple journals, incl. Journal of DoD Research and Engineering
- Technical conference session/symposium organizer and chair

SKILLS/CERTIFICATIONS/TRAINING/AWARDS

- Finite Element Modeling, Mechanics of Materials, Machine Learning, Statistical Modeling, Acquisitions, Time and Personnel Management, Programing, Planning, Budgeting, and Executing (PPBE), Acquisition Strategy and Contracting
- Naval Research Laboratory Edison Memorial Graduate Training Program Recipient
  ‡ Multi-year competitively awarded graduate education program
- NRO Office of Space Launch Senior Technical Civilian – 3QFY23
- NRO Leadership Launch for Supervisors
  ‡ 1-week in-residence, intensive leadership training
- NRO Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR)
- Coursera Certifications in project management and machine learning
- DAWIA Foundational Certification in Engineering & Technical Management

PUBLICATIONS – 1 Book Chapter, 9 Journal Articles, 17 Conference Proceedings, 4 Technical Reports, 28 conference/seminar presentations