

Cynthia W. Simmons

Cynthia Simmons is the Director of the Flight Projects Directorate (FPD) at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. FPD comprises 16 divisions with 3034 staff supporting a portfolio of over 90 flight programs and projects with a total annual institutional budget of \$3.1 B.

Ms. Simmons began her career in 1982 as a U.S. Air Force 2nd Lieutenant in the Office of Special Projects; and was distinguished with the Air Force Meritorious Service Medal with special recognition by the Under Secretary of the Air Force for her design of an innovative operational concept. After the Air Force, she worked at Unisys Corp as the Systems Software Manager; and then for the Iridium Program as Operations Team Shift Supervisor and Systems Engineer supporting 82 satellites launches within one year receiving awards for her design of a new on-orbit assessment technique for a Low Earth Orbit, multi-satellite, cross-linked constellation. From 2000 to 2009, she was an engineer for international and DARPA missions in addition to supporting NASA missions. She then became Director of Engineering for a woman-owned business, Edge Space Systems, Inc, that contracted to NASA Goddard and partnered with industry, universities and international organizations providing engineering support to space and science missions. As a Goddard contractor, she was the Lead Thermal Engineer on the NASA Mission Operations Support Team for launch and post-launch support of the GOES L and M satellites, and provided systems engineering and thermal design support on various Goddard missions for instrument and spacecraft projects such as Space Technology 5 (ST-5), GOES O and P, Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO), Global Precipitation Measurement (GPM), Messenger and Sample Analysis at Mars (SAM) instrument on the Mars Curiosity. She became a Civil Servant in 2010 and is a NASA Federal Acquisition certified Program/Project Manager (Senior Expert Level) with experience managing instrument projects with budgets up to \$460 M for NASA and international missions. After serving as Instrument Project Manager, she served as Division Chief of NASA Goddard's Instrument Systems & Technology Division comprising ~290 staff; then as Deputy Director for Planning and Business Management in the Engineering & Technology Directorate comprising 4000 staff; and later as the FPD Deputy Director for Planning and Business Management and then Deputy Director before becoming the FPD Director. In her career, she has served as Chair and Subject Matter Expert on NASA Standing Review Boards, as well as Goddard Standing Review Teams for several NASA missions; and has also provided engineering support for 21 launches for NASA, DoD and commercial space and science missions. She is a Women@NASA Honoree (2014), Goddard Senior Fellow and 2016 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals (Sammies) nominee for her contributions to the country and has received several NASA awards and honors including Agency Honor Silver Achievement Award, several NASA Exceptional Achievement Awards, Robert H. Goddard Leadership Honor Award for her leadership of instrument projects and Robert H. Goddard Mentoring Award for her contributions to the career development of other professionals.



Ms. Simmons has a Bachelor of Science from the U.S. Air Force Academy and Master of Engineering from the University of Maryland College Park in Aerospace Engineering; and is currently pursuing a PhD in Applied Mathematics at the University of Maryland Baltimore County. She is married; has 2 sons and 3 grandchildren.