

KIRLIN DISTINGUISHED SEMINAR SERIES

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Developing Project Competence



Dr. Ed Hoffman

Director,

NASA Academy of Program/Project &
Engineering Leadership

NASA

NASA missions are often “firsts” or “on-lies” that require innovation and learning. Major mission failures have led to significant changes that ultimately strengthened the agency’s performance and culture. The space shuttle Challenger and Columbia accidents and the Mars Climate Orbiter and the Mars Polar Lander failures all resulted in rigorous independent investigations, followed by intensive activities to assimilate changes and learn from these events. The NASA Academy of Program/Project & Engineering Leadership has developed strategies to promote learning that focus on three levels: individual practitioners, project teams, and the organization. The academy offers competency-based training, developmental assignments, and hands-on opportunities to help individual practitioners at each level of their careers. It currently supports over 100 project and engineering teams by offering a variety of tools and services, including: online assessments measuring team performance, workshops focusing on team effectiveness, technical life cycle support, and intensive coaching, mentoring, and consulting with expert practitioners. At the agency-wide level, it invests in knowledge sharing strategies that emphasize the power of telling stories through forums and publications in order to help create a community of practitioners who are reflective and geared toward sharing. This approach ensures multiple opportunities for professional development. In the process, individuals build their competencies skills, teams get the support they need in the field, and the agency matures as a learning organization. It is a flexible model that continues to adapt as the needs of NASA’s workforce, projects, and stakeholders evolve.



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2010

11am Refreshments 1179 Martin Hall

12pm Lecture 2108 Chemical & Nuclear Bldg.