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NEWS & VIEWS

Donna Stacy

Sustainment Technology Enterprise Process Team Lead

Air Force Sustainment Center | Technology Insertion Branch | Tinker Air Force Base, OK

When the Wright Flyer departed the launching rail on Big Kill Devil Hill at Kitty Hawk in 1903, it was powered by a one-of-a-kind, made from scratch gasoline engine, designed specifically for Orville and Wilbur Wright's heavier-than-air machine. The engine, built by Charlie Taylor, worked as advertised and landed its place in history. Although the small engine proved successful, the problem with it being the first, or one-of-a-kind, was the lack of a replacement for the airplane when repairs were required.

That problem is now a thing of the past. Thanks to the Air Force Sustainment Center (AFSC), weapon system readiness is maintained through depot maintenance, supply chain management, and installation support. AFSC covers the supply chains, air logistics centers, and air base wings at Hill AFB in Utah, Robins AFB in Georgia, and Tinker AFB in Oklahoma. At Tinker, additionally, aircraft engines are repaired and recirculated through the supply system to avoid delays in generating airpower for America. As new technologies are explored, they may become implemented at Tinker.

But new technologies do not simply fly in with the wind; they require research, tests, and trials to get off the ground. Donna Stacy, an 8-year process engineer at Tinker, knows transferring technology from the idea stage to the grand stage is a collaborative effort and is now positioned to assist the technology community with this undertaking.

Stacy heads the new Office of Research and Technology Applications (ORTA) at Tinker, which is responsible for developing collaborative interactions with industry, academia, and other government entities through an Air Force program called Technology Transfer and Transition (T3). Her office is one of 39 ORTAs in the United States, located at 18 Air Force bases, the Pentagon, and the United States Air Force Academy.

"I am new to the role but I feel it is my duty to champion technology transfer agreements as solutions to my customer's technology needs," says Stacy, who was the Sustainment Technology Enterprise Process Team Lead prior to being officially appointed to the head position in June. "My first challenge is to teach AFSC scientists and engineers about utilizing technology transfer and how nontraditional labs can engage."

Through ORTAs, various agreements can be made between public entities and the Air Force, such as Education Partnership Agreements (EPA), Patent License Agreements (PLA), and Corporate Research and Development Agreements (CRADA). Stacy anticipates a large part of her duties will involve educating the AFSC workforce on the use of technology transfer agreements to meet their technology needs. Since AFSC does not have a Research and Development budget, her office will support AFSC's new technology needs when and wherever possible.

Although the ORTA is new at Tinker, encouraging and enabling technological advancements has been a staple of AFSC's Technology Insertion Branch. "My office has worked technology insertion projects for years but did not branch out into technology transfer until last year. When we realized how much we could do with technology transfer we started to pursue more [technology transfer] resources and decided to stand up an ORTA to encourage more tech transfer within AFSC," explains Stacy.

Within the first year of its stand up, Tinker's ORTA has proven its worth for the T3 program. "We have worked a CRADA and an Exclusive PLA for a company on the topic of jet engine test cells. We are working several patents on inventions developed by our engineers," Stacy reveals.

Stacy details one of the focus areas of her new position. "The majority of my customers, the scientists and engineers in AFSC, who need new technologies spend their time supporting aircraft overhaul activities in a low volume high mix production environment." She feels being able to work with the working level scientists and engineers in AFSC and learning about their challenges and technical needs will yield the intended results of the ORTA office, and serve as a highlight to her position at the same time.

"I anticipate that I will thoroughly enjoy networking with the Technology Transfer community as well," predicts Stacy. "I haven't faced [challenges] yet but I believe the greatest hurdle will be educating people on the benefits of technology transfer."

Stacy readily embraces challenges and hurdles, understanding the key to overcoming them is to remain focused and on track...even if being the face of the highly popular meme *When You're Cleaning Your Room And You Get Distracted By All The Stuff You Found* may suggest otherwise. Stacy's meme has landed its place in history, perhaps not alongside Taylor's engine, but her legacy is bound to take flight with the technology she helps to produce at Tinker.

To learn more about the Air Force Sustainment Center Technology Insertion Branch and the Office of Research and Technology Applications, please send an e-mail request to afsc.en.tech@us.af.mil.



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