

VIRGINIA AIR & SPACE SCIENCE CENTER



NASA LANGLEY VISITOR CENTER

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For immediate release

VIRGINIA AIR & SPACE SCIENCE CENTER PICKS MELVIN FEREBEE AS INTERIM PRESIDENT

Jan. 27, 2026 — The Virginia Air & Space Science Center named Melvin J. Ferebee Jr., a longtime NASA Langley Research Center engineer, as its Interim President and CEO on Tuesday.

The announcement comes a little more than a week after the center's previous director, Jeffery Smith Ed.D, was picked by Governor-elect Abigail Spanberger to be Virginia's Secretary of Education. Ferebee will start in his new role on February 9 and will serve until the center's board selects a permanent director.

"I am deeply honored to accept the role of President & CEO of the Virginia Air and Space Science Center," Ferebee said. "I look forward to working with our dedicated team, partners and community to advance our mission of inspiring the next generation of STEM explorers through the wonders of aeronautics and space exploration."

Ferebee, a Norfolk native, worked at NASA Langley for 44 years before retiring in 2021 as director of the facility's Systems Analysis and Concepts Directorate. Before that position, he worked in a variety of areas including wind tunnel testing, research, flight testing and flight operations. Throughout his NASA career, he dealt with questions and concepts of "possibility" — studying technological innovations and interstellar architectures to provide detailed answers to questions related to science, human exploration, space technology and aeronautics.

He has served on the Virginia Air and Space Science Center Board since February 2022, worked with Dr. Smith on updating the Center's Strategic Plan and is currently serving as the Vice Chairman of the Board.

"We are thrilled that Melvin Ferebee has agreed to serve the center in this role as we look for our next leader," said L'Allegro Smith, Chairman of the Virginia Air & Space Science Center's board of directors. "His long history with NASA and his unsurpassed expertise in flight and space exploration make him an ideal choice to steward our mission going forward."

Ferebee has been a program manager for a portfolio of over 20 space technology projects. He is an award-winning engineer who has been cited as NASA's Best of the Best in collaborating

between NASA's 10 centers, and he has shared his expertise in the area of systems analysis in dozens of meeting presentations, technical memoranda, technical papers and journal articles.

He is a product of Norfolk public schools, and he has a Bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering from Georgia Tech and a Master's degree in mathematics from the College of William & Mary.

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