

## **Pro Argument:**

“There is an important role for SETP and its membership in the development and testing of UAVs. To remain relevant it is important for SETP to nurture their involvement in this important and rapidly expanding UAV aerospace sector.”

Those words are as true today as they were 5 years ago when Rogers Smith wrote them. The future of our Society depends on maintaining relevance to the aerospace community in the area of flight test. Since a large portion of current flight testing is devoted to unmanned systems, the Society should be very interested in the pilots (no they are NOT operators) conducting that testing. The Society should also welcome those pilots and their experience to be part of the Society allowing them to contribute to the purposes of the Society as set forth in the Constitution.

I have been personally involved with the design and development of several UASs. I have observed the UAS pilot contributions throughout the design, simulation, and flight testing phases of each of those programs. While it's true that the UAS cockpit is not collocated with the aircraft, the test pilot of that UAS approaches testing that unmanned aircraft in the same way as that of a manned aircraft. The UAS pilots' contributions were, in almost all respects, identical to those of pilots in manned programs. Their cognitive skills were equally employed and, yes, their piloting skills were called into use in equal measures. The UAS pilots were test pilots in every respect but the ability to qualify for membership in the Society.

A constitutional change to allow UAS pilots to qualify for associate membership will welcome valuable and contributing pilots into the Society. Associate membership (AM) does not open the doors to a voting bloc that will make wholesale changes to the Society; AMs are not able to vote on governance (election of officers) or constitutional issues. The membership committee will need to look carefully at applications to verify participation in a test program for a qualifying UAS. Flying a quad copter in the backyard can't be considered qualifying experience. The Board of Directors will need to approve a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) dealing specifically with UAS qualifying counters. This change represents an opportunity to expand the reach of the Society by welcoming new AMs and adds to the way the Society contributes to the advancement of flight safety.

Let's move the Society along with technology and make this positive and somewhat overdue change.

## **Con Argument:**

In 2011, the reference to “manned aerospace vehicles” was added to the ballot as a separate amendment to clarify that only pilots in the cockpit of manned aircraft are eligible for membership. This amendment passed by an overwhelming factor of 90.1 %. Why do we even visit this issue again?

The rigors of testing manned aircraft are separate and distinct from those of the UAV. The flight environment, man-vehicle interface, and the stakes involved are of little comparison. As a consequence, test methods and philosophies can greatly differ in consideration of the respective flight test requirements. One has to agree that the test pilot of manned aircraft quite often places his/her warm body into harm's way when performing the mission, sometimes with catastrophic results. The UAV Operator simply walks away from the console chair when the mishap occurs. The criteria for membership in the SETP are written to accept only those individuals who accept the personal risk involved with testing aircraft.

The current SETP Constitution and policies already allow for UAV Operators to have access to SETP Symposiums and public information published by SETP. UAV Operators and Test Pilots will continue to exchange lessons learned at SETP forums. What is gained by adding UAV operators as Associate Members?

Granting UAV Operators the Associate Membership status is a first step toward eventual full membership in the SETP. This may result in significant changes to the constitution, bylaws and the basic goals of the Society. Are SETP Members ready to accept this potential change to the current emphasis on manned flight test safety? Is not the UAV community currently large enough to form their own professional organization best suited to satisfy their own specific goals and interests?

SETP has always had strict criteria to join and rightly so. It is an honor to be a member of this prestigious organization. Let us not compromise the contributions and legacy of those who created our great professional Society of Experimental Test Pilots, an organization dedicated to the safe flight test of Manned Aircraft as currently stated in our Constitution.

Vote NO to the Proposed Change to the SETP Constitution!