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SEDS Chapter at Olin College Wins Award for Highest Percentage of Women

Washington, D.C. – The Chapter of Students for the Exploration and Development of Space (SEDS) at Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering in Needham, Massachusetts is the first recipient of the ISU-WIA Prize for Participation of Women.

The \$250 cash prize, funded by the International Space University (ISU) and Women in Aerospace (WIA), was awarded to the SEDS Chapter that has the highest percentage of women participants. Olin College topped the list with 47 percent female participation, while its nearest competitors averaged 25 to 30 percent. Olin College's overall female enrollment is also 47 percent.

"The award is designed to support and encourage gender diversity within the SEDS chapters across the country," explained WIA Board Chair Debra Facktor Lepore. "It is intended as a 'challenge' to SEDS chapters everywhere to step up participation of women," said Lepore.

"I'm extremely pleased that ISU and WIA have partnered to create and present this award," remarked Steven Brody, ISU's Vice President for North American Operations. "It is one of ISU's new 'Space for All' prizes recognizing and encouraging inclusively and diversity -- values at the core of ISU as established by its founders more than 20 years ago."

ISU was named WIA's first Education Partner in March 2009. WIA Board Chair Lepore and incoming president Daryle Lademan are ISU alumnae, as is Claudia Kessler, Board Chair of the recently-founded sister organization, WIA-Europe. As noted by Dr. Michael Simpson, President of ISU, "fully one-quarter of ISU's global alumni network are women, one-third of its US alumni are women, and in the class of 2008, U.S. women enrollees outnumbered U.S. men."

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Women in Aerospace, based in Washington DC, is dedicated to expanding women's opportunities for leadership and increasing their visibility in the aerospace community. WIA endeavors to engage and inspire more women to seek careers and advancement in aerospace. In October 2009, WIA established the WIA Foundation to fund scholarships for collegiate women pursuing careers in the science and engineering fields. It expects to award its first scholarship in October 2010.

ISU, the 'gold standard in interdisciplinary space education', is a graduate school that conducts programs at its central campus in Strasbourg, France, and at locations around the world. Its alumni number more than 2900 from 100 countries, many now in senior positions with commercial and government space-related organizations throughout the globe.

For more information about WIA and its activities, see:
www.womeninaerospace.org

For information about ISU's curricula and activities, see:
www.isunet.edu



WIA Board Chair Debra Facktor Lepore (*left*) joins Shannon Taylor, Vice President of the Olin College SEDS Chapter (*center*), and Daniel Grieneisen, President of the SEDS Chapter (*right*), to celebrate the WIA-ISU award announcement.



Rachael Stedman, President of Olin Chapter of Society of Women Engineers (*left*) joins Shannon Taylor, Olin SEDS Chapter Vice President (*second from right*), and Daniel Grieneisen, SEDS Chapter President, (*right*), and WIA Board Chair Debra Facktor Lepore for the WIA-ISU award announcement.