

Dr. Merri Sanchez

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Dr. Merri J. Sanchez, a Senior Level executive, is Chief Science and Technical Advisor, Headquarters Air Force Space Command, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado. The command comprises 42,000 space and cyberspace professionals. The command oversees Air Force network operations; manages a global network of satellite command and control, communications, missile warning, and space launch facilities; and, is responsible for space system development and acquisitions. Dr. Sanchez serves as the primary adviser to the commander on all scientific and technical matters concerning space and cyberspace research and development programs. She serves as the senior authority for all AFSPC scientific and technical matters, and is delegated the authority to guide the substantive scientific and technical program activities within the command. In this role, she interacts with other principals, operational commanders, combatant commands, acquisition, science and technology, and international communities to address cross-organizational science and technical issues and solutions. Dr. Sanchez represents AFSPC science and technology on decisions, high-level planning, and policy throughout the U.S. government, industry, academia, the international community, and other scientific and technology organizations at venues that affect the command. Dr. Sanchez entered government service in 1982 with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Dr. Sanchez has more than 30 years space engineering, management and financial experience working projects for the Space Shuttle, International Space Station and X-38 Crew Return Vehicle. She also served as the NASA Liaison to the Air Force Space Command, Strategic Command, Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command. She represented NASA-wide interests working directly with the Commanders of AFSPC, STRATCOM and NORAD/NORTHCOM. Merri was the senior-level NASA representative to the national security community located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Omaha, Nebraska, including AFSPC, STRATCOM and NORAD/NORTHCOM and their component commands.

Prior to assuming her current position, Dr. Sanchez was Senior Director for the Space Systems Group at the Sierra Nevada Corporation in Louisville, Colorado, where she was Deputy Program Executive and Program Manager for the Dream Chaser commercial crew spacecraft development. She also developed strategic planning of technology thrusts and provided strategic vision and leadership relative to policy, long term planning, cost management, risk management, and knowledge management across the space business area. Dr. Sanchez is a fellow in the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics and served in two vice president positions. She is the author of more than 17 publications.

EDUCATION

1985 Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering, Texas A&M University, College Station

1989 Master of Science in Physical Sciences, University of Houston at Clear Lake, Texas

1994 Master of Mechanical Engineering, University of Houston, Texas

1999 Doctorate of Philosophy in Industrial Engineering, University of Houston, Texas