



# Press Release

**Contact:**

Julie M. Gibbs

[pr@vtol.org](mailto:pr@vtol.org)

(703) 684-6777

**Vertical Flight Society Announces 2022 DiversiFlite Winners**  
*Three Competitively Selected Engineering Students at US Minority-Serving Institutions*

**Fairfax, Virginia, April 20, 2022** — The Vertical Flight Society today announced the selected participants for its inaugural DiversiFlite Scholars program. The three winners will be recognized at the Grand Awards Breakfast on Thursday, May 12, 2022, during the Society's [78th Annual Forum & Technology Display](#) in Fort Worth, Texas, USA. The program selects promising engineering students interested in vertical flight at US-recognized minority-serving institutions (MSI) for an all-expenses-paid trip to the Forum. The three winners are listed alphabetically below.

**Mr. Damian Clogher** is an aerospace engineering student at the University of California, Irvine, which is an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) and a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI). A first-generation college student expecting to graduate this Spring, Clogher founded The Futurist Society in 2020 at UC-Irvine, holding weekly meetings to discuss topics from urban air mobility (UAM) to space travel. The club has expanded to schools across the country, with more than 1,000 members.

**Mr. Andre Davis** is a mechanical engineering student at Howard University in Washington, D.C., one of the Title III Part B Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). Davis has a keen interest in robotics, building vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) drones and steampunk-inspired contraptions. He is completing his second year at Howard and expects to graduate in Spring 2024.

**Ms. Patricia Paje** is an aerospace engineering student at the University of California, Davis — an AANAPISI — graduating this Spring. Paje is also a first-generation college student and recently participated in an internship with electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft pioneer Wisk Aero, LLC, in Mountain View, California.

The Annual Forum (see [www.vtol.org/forum](http://www.vtol.org/forum)) is the largest and longest-running VTOL technical event in the world, with 225 technical papers, 30+ invited presentations by leaders in industry, academia and government, and nearly 80 exhibitors. In addition to the all-expense-paid trip to Forum 78, VFS is also providing each DiversiFlite Scholar with a guide/mentor for the event to help make the most of this

unique opportunity; special small-group meetings with aerospace industry leaders; and the opportunity to make new contacts within the vertical flight technical community.

VFS created the DiversiFlite Scholars program to encourage more engineering/pre-engineering students from underserved demographics to consider careers in vertical flight to meet the future needs of the industry. VFS has estimated that the future vertical workforce will need an additional 10,000 engineers over-and-above the current talent pipeline to meet the requirements of advanced rotorcraft and AAM development plans (see [www.vtol.org/workforce](http://www.vtol.org/workforce)).

The DiversiFlite initiative will help the vertical flight community foster a more inclusive environment that grows stronger through Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, with considerations for both the workforce and customers through Accessibility (IDEA). Learn more about the VFS DiversiFlite program at [www.vtol.org/DiversiFlite](http://www.vtol.org/DiversiFlite), and about the DiversiFlite Scholars program at [www.vtol.org/scholars](http://www.vtol.org/scholars).

Founded as the American Helicopter Society in 1943, the Vertical Flight Society is an educational, charitable non-profit for engineers, scientists and others working on vertical flight technology. For nearly 80 years, the Society has been the global leader for technical, educational, safety, advocacy and other important initiatives, bringing together industry, academia and government bodies around the world to tackle the toughest challenges in vertical flight.

VFS is @VTOLsociety on social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Vimeo](#) and [YouTube](#)

**The Vertical Flight Society**

2700 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 275, Fairfax, VA 22031 USA

1-703-684-6777 • fax: 1-703-739-9279

[staff@vtol.org](mailto:staff@vtol.org) • [www.vtol.org](http://www.vtol.org)