Detailed Minutes

Introduction
A Drone Advisory Committee (DAC) meeting was held on October 27, 2021, from 12:00 PM to 2:30 PM EST. This meeting was held virtually and livestreamed because of the COVID-19 travel and in-person meeting restrictions.

Designated Federal Officer Opening Remarks

Mr. Jay Merkle started the meeting by welcoming the audience and reading the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) opening statement. After reading the opening statement, Mr. Merkle proceeded to highlight significant achievements that have occurred since the June 2021 DAC meeting, including the conclusion of Episode Four of the 2021 Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) UAS Symposium and the progress of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC). Upon finishing his remarks, Mr. Merkle turned the meeting over to the Deputy Administrator, Mr. Bradley Mims, for his opening remarks.

View the DFO’s remarks (link is timestamped for DFO Opening Remarks):
https://youtu.be/FBiaRHRHQ1o?t=336

Deputy Administrator Opening Remarks

Mr. Mims opened his remarks by expressing gratitude to be at the DAC meeting. He recalled receiving DAC Task Group #10’s recommendations to the FAA on gender neutral language at the previous DAC meeting and proceeded to discuss the importance of having diversity and equity within the workplace. Mr. Mims explained that the FAA had been inspired by the recommendations of DAC Task Group #10, as well as several other internal initiatives, and would be hosting a virtual event, the Inclusive Language Summit, on November 10, 2021 for all to attend. Mr. Mims thanked the DAC members for their hard work before sharing his final announcement. He revealed that on Friday, October 22, the FAA received approval from the Secretary to make several major changes to the DAC, including expanding membership from 35 members to 41 members, expanding the scope of the committee to include Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) issues, interests, and policies, changing the name of the committee to the Advanced Aviation Advisory Committee (AAAC), and adding a 15th stakeholder group: the community advocate representative. Mr. Mims shared that a new solicitation for AAAC members would be posted soon in the Federal Register and urged the audience to help spread the word. He then returned the meeting to Mr. Merkle, who turned it over to Acting DAC Chair Captain Houston Mills.
Drone Advisory Committee
October 27, 2021 • Virtual Meeting

View the Deputy Administrator’s remarks (link is timestamped for ADA Mims’ Opening Remarks): https://youtu.be/FBiaRHRHQ1o?t=525

Acting DAC Chair Opening Remarks

Capt. Mills began his remarks by thanking everyone for their support and giving a personal welcome to DAC members and those viewing the livestream. Capt. Mills iterated that the work of the DAC is a key component in the safe integration of drones into the National Airspace System (NAS), and attested to the value the DAC provides the FAA through its thoughtful leadership and input of information in shaping future policy. Capt. Mills then introduced the first presentation of the afternoon.

View the Acting DAC Chair’s remarks (link is timestamped for the Acting DAC Chair’s Opening Remarks): https://youtu.be/FBiaRHRHQ1o?t=980

FAA Response to Task Group #9: Situational Awareness
Presenter: Emanuel Cruz, Manager, Implementation Branch, UAS Integration Office, FAA

Mr. Cruz began the presentation by providing a broad overview of the tasking given to DAC Task Group #9 at the February 2021 DAC meeting. He then proceeded to provide an overview of the actions of the DAC task group, as well as the high level recommendations presented to the FAA at the previous DAC meeting. He stated that the FAA concurred with these recommendations, finding them to be very robust, and then thanked the DAC task group for all of their efforts.

The DAC eBook provides the official FAA Response to Task Group #9: Situational Awareness report and presentation slides.

Following the presentation, there was a discussion and question and answer period.

Upon completion of the discussion, Mr. Cruz turned the meeting over to the Acting DAC Chair, Capt. Houston Mills, to introduce the next presentation.

View the presentation and discussion (link is timestamped for FAA Response to Task Group #9: Situational Awareness): https://youtu.be/FBiaRHRHQ1o?t=1088
FAA Response to Task Group #10: Gender Neutral Language for the Drone Community
Presenter: Abby Smith, Executive Director, Aviation Policy and Plans, Office of Policy, International Affairs and Environment, FAA

Ms. Smith began the presentation with an overview of the tasking given to DAC Task Group #10 at the February 2021 DAC meeting, including the recommendations developed by the Task Group and provided to the FAA at the previous DAC meeting. On behalf of the FAA, she thanked Task Group #10 for their hard work, as well as the high level of detail and thought that was put into this tasking. She let the DAC know that the FAA concurs with the recommendation to adopt gender neutral language for the drone and aviation communities. Ms. Smith concluded the presentation by sharing both short and long-term actions the agency plans to take to advance the work of the DAC.

The DAC eBook provides the official FAA Response to Task Group #10: Gender Neutral Language for the Drone Community report and presentation slides.

Following the presentation, there was a discussion and question and answer period.

Upon completion of the discussion, Ms. Smith turned the meeting over to the Acting DAC Chair, Captain Houston Mills.

View the presentation and discussion (link is timestamped for the FAA response to Task Group #10: Gender Neutral Language for the Drone Community):

Task Group #11 Presentation: Recommendations to FAA Acceptable Levels of Risk White Paper
Presenter: Bob Brock, Director, Division of Aviation, Kansas Department of Transportation

Mr. Brock began the presentation by thanking the DAC Task Group members for their participation, giving a special shout out to the three sub-group leaders for their assistance. Mr. Brock described the approach the task group used to tackle this tasking, starting with a simple document review and providing detailed feedback on every section of the paper. He then proceeded to provide an overview of each of the three sub-groups and the recommendations that were developed.
The DAC eBook provides the official FAA Task Group #11: Acceptable Levels of Risk White Paper report and presentation.

Following the presentation, there was a discussion and question and answer period.

Upon completion of the discussion, Mr. Brock turned the meeting over to the Acting DAC Chair, Captain Houston Mills, who entertained a motion to forward DAC Task Group #11’s recommendations on Acceptable Levels of Risk to the FAA. The motion was approved with no objections.

View the presentation and discussion (link is timestamped for FAA Response to Task Group #11: Acceptable Levels of Risk White Paper): https://youtu.be/FBiaRHRHQ1o?t=3690

Task Group #12 Presentation: Integrating UAS Operations into K-12 Curriculums

Presenters: Paul Hsu, Chairman, Hsu Educational Foundation
Brian Wynne, Chief Executive Officer, AUVSI
David Messina, FPV Coalition

Mr. Hsu opened the interim brief by providing an overview of the tasking provided to the DAC Task Group, before turning the presentation over to Mr. Messina to continue the presentation in Mr. Wynne’s absence. Mr. Messina proceeded to give an overview of the task group’s three-phase approach. The task group is currently in the second phase: Discovery. The presentation was returned to and completed by Mr. Hsu, following a discussion on potential recommendation areas. The task group will provide final recommendations at the next committee meeting.

The DAC eBook provides the official FAA Task Group #12: Integrating UAS Operations into K-12 Curriculums presentation.

Following the presentation, there was a discussion and question and answer period.

Upon completion of the discussion, Mr. Hsu turned the meeting over to the Acting DAC Chair to introduce the final agenda item.

View the presentation and discussion (link is timestamped for Task Group #12: Integrating UAS Operations into K-12 Curriculum): https://youtu.be/FBiaRHRHQ1o?t=6372
New Business/Agenda Topics

The Acting DAC Chair, Capt. Houston Mills, opened the floor to DAC members to bring up any new business items or agenda topics. Mr. Vic Moss proposed developing a task group for drone operator safety. Ms. Seleta Reynolds shared that the Los Angeles Department of Transportation recently published a concept of operations to prepare for the arrival of AAM. Mr. Jay Merkle proposed that Ms. Reynolds do a presentation on this topic at a future meeting.

View the discussion (link is timestamped for New Business/Agenda Topics):
https://youtu.be/FBiaRHRHQ1o?t=8552

Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Mr. Merkle began his closing remarks by thanking all of the presenters and those who help make the DAC possible. He acknowledged that the FAA would be taking a look at DAC Task Group #11’s report and provide their response at the next meeting. He also acknowledged that he is looking forward to reading DAC Task Group #12’s full report in the future. He encouraged everyone viewing to watch the Federal Register for an updated solicitation for new membership to the AAAC. He also made everyone aware that the next committee meeting would be in February 2022, and more information would become available about the format in the upcoming weeks. Mr. Merkle then proceeded to thank Capt. Houston Mills for his assistance with the DAC before turning the meeting over to him for is closing remarks.

Capt. Mills gave his thanks and acknowledged the success of the meeting. He expressed how great it is to be a part of the DAC as we begin to transition into include AAM. He then encouraged all interested parties to seek out opportunities to participate in the committee. He then encouraged a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved with no objections.

View the closing remarks (link is timestamped for Closing Remarks and Adjourn):
https://youtu.be/FBiaRHRHQ1o?t=8960