

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



7 Questions with *Kira Jorgensen Abercromby* Aerospace Engineering

What brought you to Cal Poly College of Engineering?

My husband and I were working at Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, and were looking to move. I remembered Cal Poly as an excellent school when I was in college and so we looked to see if there were any openings. Luckily for me, the Aerospace Department was hiring, and I was fortunate enough to get accepted.

Tell me about your research interests and why you are passionate about this topic.

My interest is in space! I wanted to be an astronaut and work for NASA as a kid and was able to fulfill part of that dream when I worked for NASA for eight years. My research areas stem from that early dream of space research. My main areas of research are orbital debris (the human-made kind), orbital mechanics and space environmental effects on materials, specifically atomic oxygen effects. I think it is amazing to be able to push boundaries on spaceflight.

What do you want others to know about your research?

We are at such an exciting time for the space industry with so many spacecraft operating in low Earth orbit, geosynchronous orbit and beyond. However, we need to be smart about how we design, build and fly spacecraft.

If you were stranded on a deserted island, what one band or musician would keep you entertained?

Barenaked Ladies. And no, they aren't ladies and not naked, just very clever musicians.

What is your favorite part of your job?

I absolutely love being in the classroom or lab with the students. They keep me thinking and learning. Watching them grow as engineers is very rewarding.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I like to spend as much time with my family as possible. I have two high schoolers, so we are busy, but it is fun as well. One of my hobbies is running, so I try to do that as much as possible.

What is the most helpful advice you've received?

Have big dreams (like being an astronaut) but don't do anything just to be an astronaut. Do things because you want to and be the best at the things you want and enjoy.



CAL POLY
College of Engineering