

Electric Propulsion Panel Discussion

“The Role of Electric Propulsion in LEO”

IEPC-2019-###

*Presented at the 36th International Electric Propulsion Conference,
Vienna, Austria
September 15-20, 2019*

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Abstract: The announcement of LEO satellite constellations supported by significant industrial and private investors has redefined the satellite communication market. The success of many of the constellation operator financial models hinges on the availability of low-cost, moderate performance, high-volume electric propulsion technology. Electric propulsion start-up companies with university lineage have appeared to meet the new demand. These start-up companies, backed by impressive venture capital investments, join a competitive electric propulsion supplier community. Long before the satellite constellations are successfully demonstrated, constellation operators must make important decisions with respect to the ability of these companies to become sustainable propulsion suppliers. The goal of the panel discussion is to ask the questions that will distill the necessary conditions for the long-term viability of the new entrants to the electric propulsion supplier market. The panel is composed of technical leaders of the new EP companies. The questions and participant selection aim to generate a healthy and meaningful debate with respect to the present and future role of EP for small satellites. The panel is of interest to the EP community and space investment community because it will provide fascinating insights into the unique dynamics of the LEO supply chain.

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