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Kendra Powers, P-8 engineering director and chief engineer

Powers may not have become an engineer without encouragement — both intended and unintended. When she was in high school and considering majors, her father pointed out that with her science and math skills, she might consider engineering. "I wasn't even sure what that was," Powers said.

She talked it over with a friend, whose reaction of distaste and the declaration that "engineering is hard" led to Powers' resolve. "I remember feeling like 'I'll show you,'" said Powers, who graduated from Montana State University with a degree in chemical engineering.

Named P-8 chief engineer in 2022, Powers leads the engineers involved in designing, developing and producing the P-8 maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft.

When Powers joined Boeing 25 years ago, as an engineer for commercial airplanes, there was only one other woman on her team and none in her chain of command. Now that she is on an engineering team with women represented at every level, she notices a different dynamic.

"I don't feel like I have to show up differently, like 'Am I being authoritarian enough,'" Powers said. "I focus on collaboration."

The key to collaboration, she emphasized, is playing offense. "No matter what your role is in supporting P-8, across this program there's an attitude that we lean in and help each other," Powers said. "We communicate candidly and share information. We are open to new ideas and wi

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She joined the Boeing team in 2010, then left to work for another company in 2017. When she expressed interest in returning to Boeing in 2020, an executive asked her what she wanted to do, what would make her happy. Matos Rodriguez was shocked.

"No one had ever asked me what would make you happy," she said. "I didn't even think to ask that of myself. To me, the question showed leadership and genuine humanity."

Matos Rodriguez recognizes mentoring as one of the most impactful influences in her career. When people reach out to her for support and coaching, she pays it forward by meeting with students, engineers and managers. "It's inspiring when someone spends time to guide you," she said.

Additionally, Matos Rodriguez serves on the National Science Board, which provides oversight to the National Science Foundation and advises the president and Congress on matters of science and engineering policy.

Dannielle Haraldson, P-8 deputy chief engineer

Haraldson was ready to quit. After a few months in college, she told an acquaintance, "I don't think engineering is for me. I'm going to switch majors."

The acquaintance, who worked for Boeing, responded: "You absolutely will not. You are meant to be an engineer."

"He knew math was my thing," said Haraldson, who has worked within Boeing engineering for 27 years. "It was the kick in the butt I needed."

In her current role, Haraldson is deputy to Powers and shares responsibility for the technical integrity of P-8 aircraft. In other words, they ensure the aircraft meets the required engineering specifications and performs optimally. To Haraldson, technical acumen is only one aspect of being an engineering leader.

"What we used to call soft skills are actually fundamental skills," Haraldson said. "Relationships and servant leadership matter. My team comes first. I want them to know they are trusted and that if they need help, I'll follow through."

A teammate who has worked closely with Haraldson noted the impact that makes.



"With Dannielle, there's the feeling of being supported without question," said Nina Cerruti, P-8 fleet support engineer. "Under her leadership, I am able to focus on the technical aspects of my work and let go of that constant battle to prove myself."

In addition to being a leader in aerospace, Haraldson is a leader in the classroom. She teaches an engineering course at her alma mater, Gonzaga University. One class just happened to have all women, a ratio Haraldson could not have fathomed when she was a student.

Still, Haraldson emphasized, diversity and inclusion are about more than numbers.

"Being able to talk openly about the challenges women face and

