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# CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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**Department of Aviation  
Academic Review Process  
CEPS Dean's Review  
July 1, 2012**

## **The Academic Program Review Process.**

The Academic Program Review is one of the most viable and cogent activities, in which the faculty of a department engages to assess its programs. The assessment includes curricula, instruction, advising, scholarship, and service. As stated in the preamble to the APR guidelines document, the program review process "... provides basic information on the nature of the department's programs and gives the faculty's assessment of the program's strengths and weaknesses. A program of self-study is the faculty's opportunity to scrutinize itself, to publicize its accomplishments and examine its shortcomings." Within the context of the Central Washington University Plan, the Academic Program Review process is an opportunity for the faculty and staff in the department, as well as the college dean and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies, to determine the degree to which a department meets the mission, vision, core values, and strategic goals of the university. Moreover, the Academic Program Review provides a formal process by which the department's faculty and staff can examine their academic activities in the context of their own mission and strategic goals.

## **External Visit**

The on-campus external review occurred on March 14-15, 2012. Dr. Mary Niemczyk, chair of the Technological Entrepreneurship & Innovation Management and Chair of Aviation Programs at Arizona State University, reviewed programs in the Department of Aviation and stated "it appears that the department is well-positioned to be a leader in collegiate aviation in the northwest and western regions of the United States."

## **Strengths of the Department of Aviation (DOA)**

The mission of the Department of Aviation is *provide comprehensive quality aviation education programs that prepare competent professionals for entry-level and leadership positions in the aviation industry.* The department split the previous B.S. degree in Flight Technology into two separate B.S. degrees: (1) Professional Pilot with specializations in Commercial Pilot and Flight Officer and (2) Aviation Management with specializations in Aviation Management and Aviation Maintenance Management. This change was approved by the Washington Higher Education Curriculum Board in early 2011 and implemented beginning AY 2011-2012.

Dr. Niemczyk identified the following strengths:

**Faculty.** There are six full-time personnel – three tenured faculty and three non-tenure track faculty – and one half-time administrative assistant. Each tenured/tenure track faculty member has a high level of expertise, credentials and experience in his/her fields with appropriate academic and aviation credentials and extensive experience in various aspects of aviation. Dr. Niemczyk also notes that the faculty and staff are highly motivated with a desire toward continuous improvement of the program and dedicated to student success.

**Facilities.** The strengths Dr. Niemczyk identified in this area are the location and accessibility of department office spaces and the functionality of the Aviation Training Center at Bowers Field. Additionally, she identified strengths of the Moses Lake facility as a good working environment that includes separate offices for flight instructors and availability of SmartBoards in classrooms.

Dr. Niemczyk met with Andy McIrvine, Chief Flight Instructor for Midstate Aviation. She stated that there is a good working relationship between Midstate and CWU and that the two entities have an interest in attracting more military veterans to the program.

**Program Quality.** Dr. Niemczyk identified focus on student learning outcomes, continuous improvement of curricula, and preparing for AABI accreditation as primary strengths. Additionally, now that military veterans can attend flight-training programs at public institutions, the faculty are currently working to determine how to implement processes to accept GI Bill funding.

The department continues to strengthen existing partnerships through internships with Boeing, Horizon Air, Alaska Airlines, and other aviation partners. During 2011 two new direct hire contracts were signed with American Eagle and Pinnacle Airlines. Additionally, contracts with American Pacific University and Vietnam Airlines brought a total of 44 students from Vietnam who graduated in 2009 and 2010 in the Aviation Maintenance Management programs.

**Students.** Faculty are meeting the professional and education needs of students despite challenges imposed by the heavy faculty loads. Several undergraduate and graduate students participated in group and individual meetings with Dr. Niemczyk. Overall, students are pleased with the program and student perceptions of the department, programs, and faculty are very positive.

**Equipment and Instructional Media.** Dr. Niemczyk identified strength of the Ellensburg program is the new flight simulators. Strengths of programs located in Ellensburg and Moses Lake are well-maintained aircraft, and repairs/services conducted in a timely manner.

**Service and Professional Activities.** The Department formed an Advisory Board that is comprised of members from airlines, the FAA, the NTSB, the Boeing Company, and alumni from the program.

### **Reported Challenges and Recommendations for the Department of Aviation**

**Faculty.** Challenges included the heavy workload which includes many responsibilities beyond teaching and the unfilled faculty line that was vacated in January, 2009. Recommendation is to hire a faculty member with aviation management experience.

**Facilities.** No challenges for the Ellensburg program, but recommended beginning plans to expand Aviation Training Center to accommodate future growth. Challenges for the Moses Lake site include having a small space for dated simulators and recommended either building or finding a large location to house the flight simulators and investigating the possibility of acquiring new ones.

**Program Quality.** No challenges identified. Recommendations include continuing to require flight students to acquire the certified flight instructor rating, contacting other institutions to determine how they are able to accept GI benefits for military veterans, and working with the VA to determine the criteria required for using the GI Bill for flight training.

**Students.** No Challenges were identified, but recommended that a mechanism be implemented to assist students with locating scholarship information and completing the applications.

**Equipment and Instructional Media.** The only challenge identified was the outdated simulators at the Moses Lake site that are located in a small area. Recommendations include remediating this challenge as well as acquiring Personal Computer Aviation Training devices to supplement instruction at both the Ellensburg and Moses Lake sites.

**Budget.** Although Dr. Niemczyk did not comment on the budget, I know there has been a deep disinvestment in higher education at the state level. Aviation has stretched faculty and resources to the extent that the amount of reserve from student fees available to upgrade equipment has dwindled.

### **Moving Forward.**

Dr. Niemczyk supports that the Department of Aviation is one of exemplary quality, strengths, and promise, and well-deserves identification as one of CWU's signature programs. Faculty are committed to the students, their fields of expertise, and to the university. The department has an excellent reputation both on campus and externally. The challenges and recommendations are, therefore, to be used to enhance the department and the university. They are intended to guide faculty in maintaining high quality programs, developing new programs where work-place demands indicate, enhancing scholarship, and generating a work-place environment conducive to optimal functioning.

In summary, Dr. Niemczyk identified three challenges currently faced by the department:

1. Marketing: The following opportunities are identified in the self-study:

- A general aviation-training marketplace consisting of the geographic region of central and eastern Washington and Oregon and northern Idaho.
- Offering four-year collegiate programs, continuing education, or simulator services for specific users within several of the target markets.
- Developing an Aviation Training Center that can provide a full range of training services to key target market users. These areas of demand including:
  - Continuation and expansion of Flight Training Devices (FTD) training services
  - Development and implementation of FAA training for technically advanced aircraft (TAA) and FAA/Industry Training Standards (FITS) specific courses
  - Airline interview preparatory courses
  - Flight Training Devices (FTD) based pilot proficiency and recurrent training courses

Marketing required to support these opportunities includes developing an aviation training center website, branding the department, developing a brochure, and initiating direct mail, electronic media, and email campaigns.

***The CWU Public Relations office can assist with designing brochures and may have funds available to support this activity.***

2. Hiring additional faculty and staff.

***In Spring 2012, the Provost approved two tenure-track faculty lines for Aviation. Searches will begin in Fall 2012.***

***Beginning July 1, 2012, the department secretary was increased from a 0.75 FTE/9 month position to a 1.0 FTE/9.5 month position.***

3. Acceptance of post-911 GI Benefits. This recommendation will be investigated.

I look forward to working and collaborating with faculty, staff, students, and department chair to meet the challenges and to enhance an excellent department.