

The Ascent

Fall 2025

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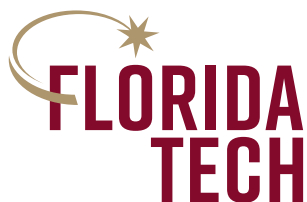
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Message From Dean John Deaton

Greetings,

Welcome to the fall 2025 semester! There's not enough space to detail all the [College of Aeronautics'](#) (COA) significant accomplishments, but I would like to highlight a few notable achievements since our last newsletter issue.

First, we continue to hire new faculty to meet the needs of our growing COA student population. This fall, we will have another year of increased student enrollment—mostly in our flight program, as anticipated. As I mentioned in our last issue, we now have all eight new Piper 100i aircraft in our inventory. The Emil Buehler Perpetual Trust continues to invest in the COA, recently awarding us a \$500,000 grant for the 2026 fiscal year to support two additional flight simulators.

We continue to institute changes that will increase the efficiency with which we service flight students while maintaining our exemplary safety record. Speaking of safety ...

As you'll read in the "A+ Accolades" section, under the direction of Travis Dietz, our maintenance team has won the [Federal Aviation Administration \(FAA\) Diamond Award of Excellence for Aviation Maintenance Technician Training](#) 10 years running. This is the highest recognition the FAA has for maintenance technicians and was based on our commitment to training and safety.

Be sure to read about the happenings within the COA. Of particular note, we conducted a successful Florida Tech Aeronautics Week that was jam-packed with events, such as our Safety Standdown—which focused on pilot mental health—our Skurla Award Winners Panel, alumni guest speakers in our classes and SUN 'n FUN Aerospace Expo, to name a few.

I don't want to leave out some of our student highlights, such as the flight team's outstanding performance at the [National SAFECON competition](#) and two flight [students who flew to Los Angeles](#) to help wildfire victims in February.

Finally, don't miss reading about what our alumni are up to. They continue to represent us well in many different ways.

I want to personally thank our [COA Advisory Board](#), the University Marketing and Advancement teams and COA faculty, staff and alumni for their support and for helping make Florida Tech's COA one of the most recognized programs in the nation, as we grow and increase our presence in both the academic and flight training arenas.



Respectfully,
John Deaton, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor, College of Aeronautics

Panthers on the Rise

1 RETIRED COL. MICHAEL DONOVAN '84

Retired Col. Michael Donovan '84 was inducted into the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps Hall of Fame during a ceremony May 5 at Fort Gregg-Adams, Virginia. The honor recognizes Donovan's 30-year career in active and reserve service.

Donovan began his Army career in 1984, when he was commissioned as an engineer lieutenant. In 1987, he transferred into the Explosive Ordnance Disposal field and went on to serve in a variety of positions with increasing responsibility and trust.

Throughout his career, he made significant contributions to national objectives and the ordnance mission. His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster and several others.

2 SEAN MCGEOUGH '95, '05 M.S.

Sean McGeough '95, '05 M.S., was named chair of the International Aircraft Dealers Association (IADA) Foundation Board. McGeough is executive vice president of business development in North America for Jet Support Services Inc. and a Florida Tech adjunct instructor for [Aviation Career Planning](#) (AVT 2303), which allows him to leverage his extensive industry experience to help guide the next generation of aviation professionals.

McGeough holds both a [Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management](#) and a [Master of Science in Management](#) and is currently pursuing a [Doctor of Aviation](#) degree.

"I am honored to be involved in the mission of the IADA Foundation, dedicated to engaging young learners and professionals in the excitement of a career in business aviation," McGeough said.

3 EMILY SIGGINS '11 A.S., '12, '15 MSA

Emily Siggins '11 A.S., '12, '15 MSA, made history when she piloted a JetBlue Airways flight from Boston to Bermuda's L.F. Wade International Airport, becoming the first female Bermudian pilot to fly a commercial jet into her home country.

Her arrival was celebrated with a water cannon salute from the airport fire department and a warm welcome by family, friends and Lester Nelson, chief executive of the Bermuda Airport Authority, who joined in celebrating her milestone.

"I haven't stopped smiling since I flew back from Bermuda," Siggins said. "Just seeing everyone who knew me for so long and the water cannon salute is something I'm not going to forget anytime soon."

Siggins' aviation journey began early—she earned her Private Pilot License at 18. She holds a [bachelor's degree in airport management](#), a [master's degree in aviation safety](#) and commercial pilot and flight instructor certifications.

Originally based in Boston, Siggins now flies out of Orlando, operating routes throughout the U.S., Mexico and the Caribbean. Returning home to Bermuda in the cockpit of a commercial jet was, for her, a dream come true.

"It's not often I get the chance to fly home," Siggins said. "So, when the opportunity came up, I took it immediately."

4 JUSTIN LOBB '12

Justin Lobb '12 recently traveled to Washington, D.C., with his fellow members of the Florida Airports Council, a nonprofit trade organization representing the state's airports and aviation businesses, to advocate for federal policies to strengthen and advance Florida's airports. The council works to ensure the continued growth and success of Florida's aviation industry through advocacy, education and professional development.

Lobb, who earned his [bachelor's degree in aviation management](#) from Florida Tech, serves as deputy director of aviation at Naples Airport Authority. In this role, he oversees the airport's fixed-base operation, security, maintenance, operations, planning and development.

Recognized as one of the aviation industry's rising leaders, Lobb was a National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) Business Aviation Top 40 Under 40 Award recipient in 2021.



5 LETWAN SUTTON '20 A.A., '20, '21 MBA

Letwan Sutton '20 A.A., '20, '21 MBA, accepted a full-time position with Embraer after graduating from Florida Tech with his [bachelor's degree in aviation management](#) and his [associate degree in air traffic control](#).

However, he soon realized his passions in the aviation industry were geared more toward finance and leadership. So, he returned to Florida Tech and earned his [MBA](#) from the [Bisk College of Business](#).

Today, Sutton is the manager of aviation tax at MySky, the only artificial intelligence-powered spend management platform designed for the private aviation industry.

In his role, Sutton helps company executives comply with the Federal Aviation Administration, IRS and Securities and Exchange Commission requirements during private travel.

In October 2023, Sutton was honored with the National Business Aircraft Association's (NBAA) Top 40 Under 40 award. He was selected for this honor for being an innovative thinker in the aviation industry, challenging norms and breaking barriers. Sutton also serves as professional development co-chair on the NBAA's Young Professionals in Business Aviation Council and was a panelist for Florida Tech's recent business ethics and evolution of AI panel event.

"The award caught me off guard, but it went a long way in making me feel like my work was appreciated, and it gave me even more inspiration to keep doing good in the industry," Sutton says.

6 JOSSELYN SLAGLE '20, '23 MSA

Josselyn Slagle '20, '23 MSA, was honored as the 2025 National Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Safety Team Representative of the Year by the General Aviation Awards program. She received the award in July during the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) AirVenture 2025, where her name was added to a commemorative plaque displayed in the EAA AirVenture Museum.

After earning her [bachelor's degree in aviation management](#) and her [master's in aviation safety](#) from Florida Tech, Slagle applied to become an FAA safety team representative to put her expertise and passion for aviation safety into practice. She has served in this role since 2023.

Slagle is chief flight instructor for Haski Aviation at New Castle Municipal Airport and a lead deicer for Integrated Deicing Services at Pittsburgh International Airport.

Alumni Spotlight

Full Circle:

VICTOR OSUMI'S RETURN TO AVIATION

After working for over 27 years in the hotel industry, Victor Osumi '85 A.S., '86, has returned to his aviation roots, now serving as the managing director and president for Delta Air Lines Japan.

"Florida Tech's broader experiences and educational opportunities gave me multiple options to navigating through my career journey," Osumi says. "If I had attended a strictly flight school, my knowledge and educational level would not have given me as many options."

Before he transitioned to Delta, Osumi worked for Marriott International, where he served as area vice president in Japan and Guam. In this role, he was responsible for the operations of 43 Marriott-branded hotels and over 30 new hotels that were under development.

One of his career highlights has been working for a private equity company leading a project to acquire an Australian hotel group.

"To make the first step toward your goals, be sure to take any opportunity that arises," Osumi says. "So often, people narrow down to a specific area of a job

and miss out on an opportunity. Don't forget to think about the long term."

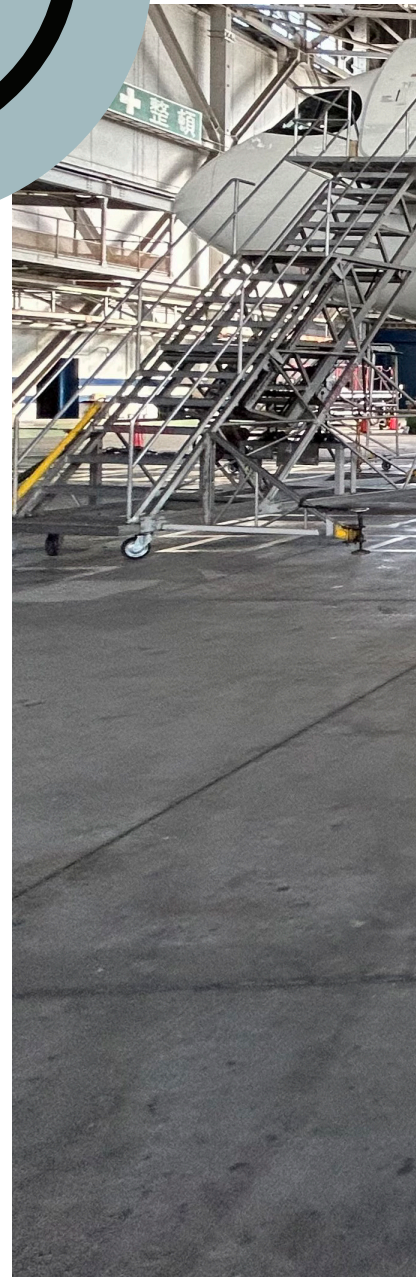
Today, Osumi's day-to-day tasks vary from government advocacy to managing supply chain issues and working closely with airport operations teams.

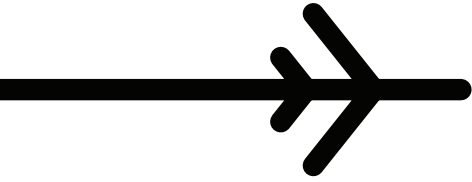
"With my responsibilities with Delta, my education from Florida Tech helps me with my day-to-day job across the airline operations."

In January 2024, Osumi was elected as president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ), which consists of over 3,000 members who represent 600 companies and more than 40 countries. Before that, he served as the vice president in 2023.

Osumi fondly recalls his favorite memory from his time at Florida Tech as his first solo flight at Melbourne Orlando International Airport.

"My passion for aviation never left my heart, and my experiences at Florida Tech have kept me in tune with the industry related through the alumni community."





My passion for aviation never left
my heart, and my experiences at
Florida Tech have kept me in tune
with the industry...

–Victor Osumi '85 A.S., '86



Q&A:

Florida Tech Connection:

'85 [A.S. aviation management/
flight technology](#), '86 [B.S.
aviation management/
flight technology](#)

Favorite Athlete:

Shohei Ohtani, pitcher
and hitter for the Los
Angeles Dodgers

Hobby:

Playing golf with my
wife and friends

Hidden Talent:

Singing

Top Travel Destination:

The moon

Favorite Quote:

"Success is never accidental."

And the Award Goes To...

MEREDITH CARROLL '03 M.S.



NASA University Leadership Initiative

A Florida Tech-led group of researchers was selected to help NASA solve challenges in aviation through its prestigious [University Leadership Initiative](#) (ULI) program. Over the next three years, professor of aviation human factors [Meredith Carroll '03 M.S.](#) and associate professor of computer science and software engineering [Siddhartha Bhattacharyya](#) will work to understand the vital role of trust in autonomy.

Their project, "Trustworthy Resilient Autonomous Agents for Safe City Transportation in the Evolving New Decade" (TRANSCEND), aims to establish a common framework for engineers and human operators to determine the trustworthiness of machine-learning-enabled autonomous aviation safety systems. TRANSCEND was one of three projects chosen for the latest ULI awards.

With Carroll leading the human factors side and Bhattacharyya leading the engineering side, the research group will begin bridging the trust gap by integrating theories, principles, methods, measures, visualizations, explainability and practices from different domains—this will build the TRANSCEND framework. Then, they'll test the framework using a diverse range of tools, flight simulators

and intelligent decision-making to demonstrate trustworthiness in practice. This and other data will help them develop a safety case toolkit of guidelines for developing processes, recommendations and suggested safety measures for engineers to reference when designing "trustworthy" learning-enabled autonomous systems.

"The goal is to combine all our research capabilities and pull together a unified story that outputs unified products to the industry," Carroll said. "We want products for the industry to utilize when implementing learning-enabled autonomy for more effective safety management systems."

CHARLES PRENAVEAU '25



Endeavor Air Advanced Training Scholarship

In February, Charles Prenaveau '25 was awarded a \$4,000 Endeavor Air Advanced Training Scholarship at the [National Gay Pilot Association](#) (NGPA) Winter Warm-Up in Palm Springs, California. The Winter Warm-Up is NGPA's annual flagship West Coast event and the organization's largest yearly gathering.

Prenaveau was among several recipients selected in 2024 as part of NGPA's scholarship program, which awarded more than \$400,000 in funding to support aspiring LGBTQ+ aviation community members.

A Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) and Certified Flight Instructor-Instrument (CFII), Prenaveau used the scholarship to earn his Multi-Engine Instructor (MEI) certification, a critical step in expanding his qualifications and preparing for a professional pilot career.

"This support will significantly aid me in advancing my training and continuing my journey toward becoming a professional pilot," he said.

LUKE PYLPCIW



Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society Scholars Award

Luke Pylypciw was awarded the Tony Jannus Distinguished Aviation Society Scholar Award during the society's annual awards dinner.

Pylypciw was one of seven students across Florida to receive the \$4,000 cash award, which provides financial support to eligible students who are pursuing careers in aviation and are enrolled in colleges or aviation trade schools in the state.

Pylypciw is pursuing an [A.A. in air traffic control](#) and a [B.S. in aviation management with flight](#). He also works as a Certified Flight Instructor at [Florida Tech Aviation](#) and holds Commercial Single-Engine Land (CSEL) and Commercial Multi-Engine Land (CMEL) ratings.

The scholarship will assist Pylypciw as he advances his training and prepares for a professional aviation career.

A+ Accolades

DIAMOND AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Federal Aviation Administration

For the last 10 years, every aircraft maintenance technician at [Florida Tech Aviation](#) has put in extra work. Without fail, each year, they participate in specialized training in aviation safety, technical knowledge, aircraft systems, aviation regulations and FAA compliance guidance.

For the 10th straight year, the Federal Aviation Administration has recognized these special efforts at Florida Tech Aviation with the highest recognition it has for maintenance technicians:

the [Diamond Award of Excellence for Aviation Maintenance Technician Training](#).

"The Florida Tech Aviation Maintenance Department is a foundational element contributing to the success of our flight training programs, and so commitment to safety must always be our highest priority," said Travis Dietz, director of maintenance. "We are proud to be recognized again by the FAA with their highest award for aviation maintenance departments. This recognition represents the daily efforts every member of our team makes to support our flight students and flight instructors."

Happenings

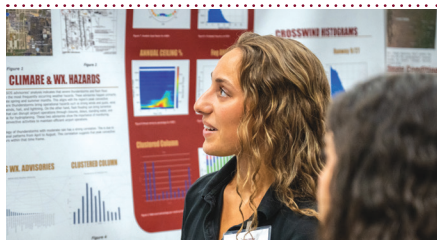


New Planes Take Flight

This summer, photographer Mike Killian joined Florida Tech Aviation in the sky for an in-air photo shoot. The refreshed images capture the recently painted planes, featuring the new Florida Tech Aviation affinity mark on the tail, in flight over campus and along the coastline. *Learn more about the new mark on page 12.*

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COA RESEARCH SHOWCASE HIGHLIGHTS OVER 100 STUDENT PROJECTS



The [College of Aeronautics](#) highlighted student projects and accomplishments at the COA Research Showcase April 29. For the first time, the event was held in the [Charles and Ruth Clemente Center for Sports and Recreation](#), a significant expansion from its previous venue, [George M. Skurla Hall](#).

The move was to accommodate more than 100 research projects from three courses: [Aviation Meteorology 2 \(AVS 3201\)](#), [Airport Terminal Development \(AVM 4202\)](#) and [Aviation Research \(AVT 4002\)](#).

During the event, students had the unique opportunity to present their research and engage directly with senior university leadership, who attended to support and ask insightful questions about the projects.

The COA Research Showcase proved to be a valuable experience for all students involved, highlighting their hard work and dedication to advancing the field of aeronautics.

FLORIDA TECH AND ENAC STRENGTHEN GLOBAL AVIATION PARTNERSHIP



Partners from France's École Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ENAC), Europe's largest aviation university, recently visited Florida Tech for a productive and informative session focused on ongoing collaboration between the two institutions.

The [partnership](#) between the [College of Aeronautics](#) and ENAC centers on a student exchange initiative and dual-degree programs that allow students to study abroad at each other's campuses. This collaboration has already produced many successful alumni who are thriving in the global aviation industry.

During the visit, ENAC representatives met with [President John Nicklow](#) and other university leaders to discuss ways to continue, strengthen and expand the partnership.

COA, GOAA HOST AIRPORT PLANNING CHARRETTE FOR STUDENTS

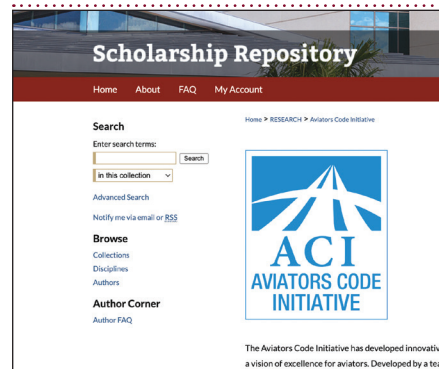


The [College of Aeronautics \(COA\)](#) collaborated with the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority (GOAA) to give students a unique hands-on experience in airport planning and development.

The collaborative charrette, organized by GOAA assistant vice president of planning Kevin Thompson '13, alongside COA Associate Dean [Rian Mehta '13, '15 M.S.A., '17 Ph.D.](#), brought together students and industry professionals to tackle real-world challenges faced by Orlando International Airport (MCO) and Orlando Executive Airport (ORL), both operated by GOAA.

Students from the undergraduate course [AVM 3202 - Airport Design](#) and graduate course [AVM 5102 - Airport Development](#) were invited to participate in two interactive sessions. Split into small groups, students tackled real-world challenges by exploring questions about terminal design, parking, passenger flow the future of aviation and more.

AVIATORS CODE INITIATIVE'S CODES OF CONDUCT NOW ARCHIVED AT EVANS LIBRARY



A remarkable collection of aviation best practices across a range of sectors developed over decades by industry professionals to elevate safety and professionalism is now permanently archived at Florida Tech's [Evans Library](#).

The Aviators Code Initiative (ACI), which produced the material, and the library proudly announced the new affiliation. The partnership means the full collection of ACI digital content, including the centerpiece *Aviators Model Code of Conduct*, is hosted and publicly available through the library's online [Scholarship Repository](#).

"This collaboration ensures enduring access to the aviation community's most trusted behavioral guidance," said Michael Baum, founder and member of ACI's Permanent Editorial Board. "Florida Tech's commitment to science, innovation and industry leadership makes the university an ideal steward for these essential documents."

The ACI's Aviators Codes of Conduct were developed by teams of aviation professionals, including Permanent Editorial Board member and COA professor emerita Donna Wilt, and refined through decades of operational insight and peer review from respected trainers, professional pilots, regulators and researchers.

They offer guidance for 11 aviation practitioners: aviators, aviation maintenance technicians, flight instructors, designated pilot examiners, glider aviators, gyroplane pilots, helicopter pilots, light sport aviators, seaplane pilots,

student pilots and unmanned aircraft system (UAS) pilots.

Each code, on average about 10 pages long, presents a vision of excellence across seven sections: General Responsibilities of Aviators; Passengers and People on the Surface; Training and Proficiency; Security; Environmental Issues; Use of Technology; and Advancement and Promotion of Aviation.

"Florida Tech prepares global leaders in aviation, engineering and science, business and more, all committed to advancing knowledge and addressing the needs of industry and society with integrity and respect," COA Dean John Deaton said. "The university's mission and core values align seamlessly with ACI's vision of fostering safety and professionalism in aviation, and we are honored to host this collection."

FLORIDA TECH AVIATION ACQUIRES POWERFUL FLIGHT TRAINING DEVICES



[Florida Tech Aviation](#) has purchased two cutting-edge flight simulators from the French company ALSIM that will supercharge student training on its new fleet of Piper Pilot 100i aircraft.

The purchase was made possible by a [\\$1 million grant](#) from the Emil Buehler Perpetual Trust.

The ALSIM AL100i is an exact replica of the Pilot 100i, one of the most popular training aircraft in the U.S. Florida Tech Aviation recently [added eight](#) to its fleet. The simulator is designed to Flight Training Device (FTD) Level 5 standards, ALSIM noted, with a full-size flight deck replica, a semi-enclosed instructor station, active control loading and a specific flight model based on aircraft flight characteristics.

The AL100i is also equipped with an immersive visual system featuring three projectors, delivering an unequaled 210-by-55-degree field of view. Additionally, it features the original G3X and GNX 375

avionics manufactured by Garmin. This integration guarantees the same level of performance, features and ergonomics found in the actual aircraft, a world first for this avionics suite.

Flight training devices are an essential and featured element of all the flight courses at Florida Tech Aviation, said Jay Arcemont, executive director of flight operations.

"ALSIM was the first company to provide a custom-designed simulator that best matched our Piper Pilot 100i aircraft with G3X Touch avionics," he said. "We were impressed by the build quality, precision cockpit replica and clear, sharp visuals. These strengths, coupled with ALSIM's record of innovation and customer support, convinced us these were a great fit for Florida Tech Aviation."

FLORIDA TECH FLIGHT TEAM HAS STRONG SHOWING AT NATIONAL COMPETITION



In [February](#), the [Florida Tech Flight Team](#) earned a hard-fought third place at the 2025 National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) Regional Safety and Flight Evaluation Conference (SAFECON) competition in La Grange, Georgia, securing a coveted spot at the national competition and setting the stage for a showdown with the country's best collegiate flight teams.

In [May](#), the team traveled to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, to compete in the 2025 NIFA National SAFECON. The Florida Tech Flight Team showcased exceptional skill and teamwork across a series of challenging safety and flight evaluation events. Members' efforts culminated in a strong overall showing, with the team placing in the top 20 in five of the 10 individual and team events, highlighted by top finishes in Certified Flight Instructor, Unlimited Navigation and Crew Resource Management.

Last year, the team broke into the top 20 in just one event, making this year's progress significant.

"The competition is the best of the best from around the country, so for us to move up in the standings is a good achievement," said [Rian Mehta](#), [College of Aeronautics](#) associate dean and flight team advisor. "I am proud of them and their dedication to their work."

STUDENTS TAKE TO THE SKIES TO AID CALIFORNIA WILDFIRE RELIEF



Fueled by high winds and dry conditions, the devastating wildfires that raged across the Los Angeles area from Jan. 7 to Jan. 31 claimed at least 30 lives and destroyed thousands of homes and buildings. The fires triggered an outpouring of support from across the country. Among those who stepped up were two Florida Tech students who used their piloting skills to aid in relief efforts.

Diego Teixeira and Blaise Pasquier are best friends, [aviation management with flight](#) majors, fraternity brothers and aspiring commercial airline pilots. Their shared passion for aviation and commitment to helping others made them the perfect team for this mission.

"Blaise and I actually thought of going on the same mission to California before even mentioning it to each other," Teixeira said. "My only drawback at first was, 'Who am I going to do it with?' A few days later, I got the call from Blaise with the idea, and it was the last push I needed to go on this mission."

The two launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds for their travel to California and aid efforts. The response was overwhelming, raising over \$4,000, thanks to the generosity of fellow students, friends and family.

Continued on page 10

With the funds, they rented a small aircraft, allowing them to transport food, supplies and other necessities directly to those in need.

Teixeira and Pasquier departed for Los Angeles Feb. 7 and transported and delivered 800 pounds of clothes and essential goods to ImpactLA, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing relief to those affected by the wildfires. The two spent a total of 13 hours in flight.

In addition to delivering supplies, they used \$2,000 of leftover funds to directly assist two families who had lost their homes in the disaster by taking them shopping.

"We were telling each other on the way back, we are never forgetting about this," Pasquier said in a Spectrum News 13 story.

COA HOSTS BOOTHS AT TWO INDUSTRY EVENTS



The [College of Aeronautics \(COA\)](#) made a strong impression at two major aviation industry gatherings, highlighting the college's commitment to connecting with aviation professionals and aspiring leaders while spreading the word about Florida Tech and inspiring the next generation.

For the first time, the COA hosted a booth at the [36th Annual Women in Aviation International \(WAI\) Conference](#) in Denver. As the world's largest organization dedicated to women in all aspects of aviation and aerospace, WAI attracted thousands of attendees. The conference featured an exciting blend of world-class speakers, a bustling exhibit hall and educational sessions. It recognized over 90 scholarship recipients and provided invaluable opportunities for Florida Tech students, faculty and alumni to network with professionals and peers across the industry.

The COA also participated in the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) Orlando Regional Forum. The event gathered current and prospective business aircraft owners, operators, manufacturers and key industry personnel. Featuring education sessions, an aircraft display and more than 100 exhibits, the NBAA forum helped introduce business aviation to local officials and potential new operators while providing crucial updates on regional issues affecting business aircraft use.

NBAA OFFERS FREE MEMBERSHIPS TO COA STUDENTS



[College of Aeronautics \(COA\)](#) students have a new opportunity to connect with the business aviation industry through free memberships to the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA).

NBAA is the leading organization representing companies that rely on general aviation aircraft to enhance their efficiency, productivity and success. Normally, student memberships cost between \$30 and \$40 per year, but thanks to the efforts of Jo Damato '97, NBAA's senior vice president of events and professional engagement, all COA students will receive complimentary one-year memberships.

Membership provides students with valuable resources, including access to exclusive job postings, internships, mentorship programs and free entry to NBAA conferences—a significant boost to their professional development and career readiness.

COA EXPANDS AAM CURRICULUM WITH TWO NEW COURSES



The [College of Aeronautics \(COA\)](#) is continuing to lead in cutting-edge aviation education with the approval to develop two new courses focused on advanced air mobility (AAM): [Advanced Air Mobility Vehicle Design Considerations \(AVT 5203\)](#) and [Advanced Air Mobility Legal and Environmental Frameworks \(AVT 5204\)](#).

These new offerings, available this fall 2025 semester, will complement two existing AAM courses, [Advanced Air Mobility Ecosystem \(AVT 5201\)](#) and [Advanced Air Mobility Infrastructure \(AVT 5202\)](#), forming a comprehensive curriculum that prepares students for the future of urban and regional aerial transportation.

AVT 5203 will dive into the design aspects of the novel aircraft emerging in the AAM sector, including various vehicle configurations such as large quadcopter-style electric aircraft capable of short urban flights. The course will cover enabling technologies like electric propulsion systems, batteries, autonomy and pilot interfaces, while also addressing performance, human factors, certification, training, ride quality and cabin design considerations.

Meanwhile, AVT 5204 will focus on the complex legal and environmental landscape surrounding AAM. Students will explore domestic and international regulatory frameworks, safety management, airspace integration, licensing, liability, environmental impact assessments, noise regulation and urban planning issues unique to advanced air mobility. The course will emphasize law, policy and sustainability by analyzing key treaties, statutes and case law shaping the future of aerial transportation.

These innovative courses reflect real-world AAM examples, such as highly

automated, flying car-like vehicles relying on vertiports—specialized hubs for safe takeoff, landing and charging—to enable rapid urban trips, like a 15-minute ride from a Manhattan rooftop vertiport to John F. Kennedy International Airport.

COA LAUNCHES NEW AVIATION METEOROLOGY MINOR



The [College of Aeronautics \(COA\)](#) is launching a new [aviation meteorology minor](#) beginning in the fall 2025 semester.

Developed to deepen students' understanding of weather's impact on aviation operations, the minor will cover topics including meteorological codes, charts and aviation bulletins; identification of potentially hazardous in-flight weather conditions; basic prediction techniques for flight planning; seasonal weather patterns; and the principles of atmospheric circulation, stability, convection, moisture, air masses and fronts.

To complement the minor, the college will introduce a new course—[Aviation Weather Briefing and Discussion \(AVS 3999\)](#)—in spring 2026.

AVS 3999 is designed to prepare students to serve as effective weather briefers. Through weekly briefings and in-depth discussions, students will learn to analyze and communicate weather information relevant to aviation, using a wide range of data sources, including Meteorological Aerodrome Reports (METARs), Terminal Aerodrome Forecasts (TAFs), aviation weather advisories, satellite imagery, radar data, upper air observations and numerical weather prediction models.

The aviation meteorology minor was created by assistant professor [Michael Splitt](#), who will also serve as instructor for each course.

AERONAUTICS WEEK BRINGS TOGETHER STUDENTS, ALUMNI, AND AVIATION LEADERS



In April, the [College of Aeronautics \(COA\)](#) hosted its inaugural [Aeronautics Week](#)—several days of events that culminated in the return of a long-missed tradition: the [Hangar Networking Event](#). With over 220 attendees, the event fostered meaningful connections between students and alumni and, for many, became one of the most memorable parts of the week.

Also that week, the [Safety Standdown](#) reinforced the COA's uncompromising focus on safety, and the advisory board breakout sessions allowed alumni to share their expertise and help guide the college's future.

One of the most anticipated events was the [Skurla Award Winners Panel](#), where for the first time in Florida Tech history, 16 recipients of the [George M. Skurla Outstanding Alumni Award](#) returned to campus for a rare and inspiring discussion among some of the college's most accomplished graduates.

Skurla Award Winners:

1996 Skurla Winner
[Paris Michaels '74 A.S., '76, '83 M.S.](#)

2000 Skurla Winner
[Greg Zahornacky '80 A.S., '82](#)

2001 Skurla Winner
[Kiko Picornell '84, '85 M.S., '87 MBA](#)

2008 Skurla Winner
[Diego Rincon '92](#)

2009 Skurla Winner
[Jill Demko '98 A.S., '99](#)

2010 Skurla Winner
[Clara Bennett '91](#)

2012 Skurla Winner
[David Byers '78, '04 Ph.D.](#)

2014 Skurla Winner
[Bill Johnson '76 A.S.](#)

2015 Skurla Winner
[Greg Donovan '90 A.S., '91](#)

2016 Skurla Winner
[Fin Bonset '96, '99 MSA](#)

2017 Skurla Winner
[Huntley Lawrence '85](#)

2018 Skurla Winner
[Miguel Estremera '98](#)

2019 Skurla Winner
[Jason Terreri '01](#)

2022 Skurla Winner
[Juan Moreno '87](#)

2023 Skurla Winner
[Jill Fanes '91, '93 MBA](#)

2024 Skurla Winner
[Dave Mecartney '80 A.S., '82](#)

Listen to some of their best career insights and advice:





College of Aeronautics

Florida Institute of Technology
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Featured Photo



FLORIDA TECH AVIATION HONORS LEGACY WITH NEW AFFINITY MARK

When F.I.T. Aviation LLC officially dissolved in June 2024, all aviation business operations transitioned fully under Florida Tech as a dedicated subunit within the [College of Aeronautics](#), now operating as [Florida Tech Aviation](#).

As part of this transition, the new Florida Tech Aviation subunit logo has replaced the old logo in all business operations. Still, there was a strong desire to honor the legacy of F.I.T. Aviation with a symbol that reflected both its history and its continued evolution.

The newly designed affinity mark achieves just that—a modern interpretation of the long-standing F.I.T. Aviation emblem. The orbit and star pay homage to the university's iconic logo, reinforcing Florida Tech's identity and roots. Meanwhile, the outer propeller symbolizes the training aircraft that have been central to aviation education, and the inner jetliner points toward the future trajectory of Florida Tech Aviation's growth and innovation.

With this new visual identity, Florida Tech Aviation honors its legacy while charting a dynamic path ahead in aviation education and innovation.

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