

The Ascent

Summer 2023

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Message From Dean John Deaton

Greetings,

I am delighted to present our very first College of Aeronautics (COA) Newsletter, *The Ascent*! Published twice a year, the newsletter will include spotlights on notable alumni and what they are doing in the aeronautics arena, student news, occasional feature articles that highlight what we are doing in the COA, club spotlights (this issue showcases Women in Aviation) and various happenings that have occurred since our last newsletter.



I'd like to take this opportunity to mention a few notable items. First, we have one of the largest flight classes on record this fall. This will bring about certain challenges, but we are prepared. FIT Aviation has been invested in purchasing additional aircraft to handle the load, and we have incorporated certain efficiencies into how we manage flight students to lessen the burden on flight instructors and ensure flight students get timely flight scheduling.

Second, we have hired three additional faculty for the fall semester: Professor Vivek Sharma '18 MSA, '23 Ph.D., will teach our statistics and methodology courses; Professor Elie Choi will instruct the aviation meteorology and aeronautics 1 courses; and Professor Jim Guida will be responsible for our aerodynamics, national airspace system and aeronautics 2 courses.

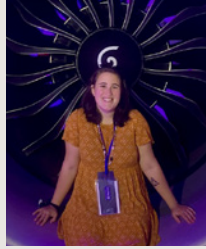
Finally, this newsletter wouldn't be possible without the help of our faculty and the University Marketing team. Thank you both for your assistance, and we are looking forward to future issues and updates in the COA!

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

Panthers on the Rise

TAYLOR RAINS '17

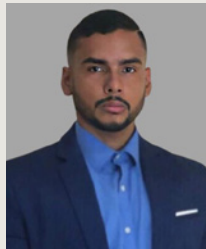
Taylor Rains '17 became a full-time aviation reporter with Insider Inc. in 2022. It felt like a perfect fit, Rains said, as she could review flights, get behind-the-scenes tours and share her expertise on topics, such as the pilot shortage. She built a freelance portfolio by writing for various outlets, including AirlineGeeks.com. In 2021, she took a fellowship with Insider Inc. and was then hired for the full-time gig.



"I've traveled to eight countries across four continents on reporting trips for Insider," Rains said. "I've gotten to do a lot of unique things, like tour Boeing's assembly line and its new 777X airliner, sleep in a retired Boeing 747 in Sweden and tour flight attendant and pilot training facilities in New Zealand and Singapore. In total, I've visited 44 countries and all seven continents between work and leisure."

JULIO TOMAS CORONADO '23

Julio Tomas Coronado '23 recently achieved American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) Certified Member status. He is the only person in Panama to have this designation, which "signifies that you have a diverse knowledge of the primary functions of how an airport operates and can provide the opportunity to progress up the ranks in a close-knit community," according to AAAE.



Coronado, who recently started working as a quality assurance auditor at DHL Aero Expreso S.A. at the Tocumen International Airport cargo terminal in Panama City, was inspired to achieve the certification by William Rankin, Ph.D., his former COA professor.

"I'm proud to say I am the only Panamanian to have it, and I am one of only seven within Latin America," Coronado said.

KEVIN HUDGINS '19

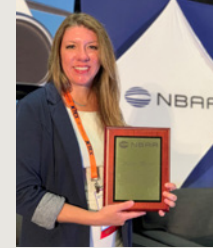
Kevin Hudgins '19 is an engineer for JetBlue's communication, navigation, surveillance and technical programs team. As an engineer of aircraft data programs, Hudgins works with his team toward innovating the use of aircraft sensor data. Engineering this data into a more usable medium allows the team's analysts to find insights that save the airline money and keep the operation safe. Living in New York City, he likes to explore the area by foot or by air, occasionally renting Cessna aircraft to maintain his private-pilot skills.



"I enjoy this career because it combines my knack for data science with my passion for aviation," Hudgins said. "Florida Tech gave me the flexibility to explore both. While learning the technical skills in my regular coursework, I was also able to explore my passion for aviation by flying with the Florida Tech Flight Team."

KODEY BOGART '22 M.S.

Doctoral candidate Kodey Bogart '22 M.S. was selected to receive the prestigious Dr. Tony Kern Professionalism in Aviation Award from the National Business Aviation Association. She is enrolled in Florida Tech's Av.D. program and is the CEO of KB Solutions Safety Management, an aviation consulting firm focused on safety management system development, implementation, regulatory guidance and training. A former U.S. Army aviator and decorated Operation Iraqi Freedom combat veteran, Bogart has more than 2,500 hours of accident-free flight time in a variety of helicopters and has flown law enforcement and air ambulance missions.



"A true professional is always looking for continued growth and knowledge," Bogart said. "For me, it's always been about picking up a book, reading journal articles, getting more education. It's important for all of us to get out of our bubble and learn as much as we can."

Meet the Bourne Family: Fun Facts about Dennis and Brandon Bourne

COA Connection

Dennis: '79 A.S., '81 B.S., air commerce/flight technology

Brandon: '13 B.S., aviation management, flight

Favorite Airport:

Dennis: Grantley Adams International Airport (Barbados, hometown)

Brandon: Miami International Airport (loves the water)

Dream Vacation:

Dennis: Chile | **Brandon:** Italy

Alternate Career:

Dennis: Aircraft mechanic | **Brandon:** Real estate

Last Movie:

Dennis: "Top Gun: Maverick"

Brandon: "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania"

Favorite Florida Tech Memory:

Dennis: All four years were the best of my life, so it's hard to choose, but I did love studying and spending time with friends in "The Jungle" (Patterson Botanical Garden).

Brandon: Flying to Turks and Caicos in a Seminole with my professor and my roommate. We had dinner on the beach and were able to see wild horses running past.



Alumni Spotlight

Dennis and Brandon Bourne All in the Family: Father-Son Panther Duo Makes American Airlines History

In September 2022, Dennis Bourne '79 A.S., '81, and Brandon Bourne '13 made history as the first Black father-son duo to fly together with American Airlines.

It was an unlikely pairing. They live in different parts of the country—Brandon is based in North Carolina, Dennis in Philadelphia—and while they originally flew the same aircraft, Airbus 321, Brandon had received a captain's bid and would soon change to a Boeing 737.

But having served over 30 years with the company, Dennis was able to pull some strings to place the two on the same aircraft before Brandon made the switch.

"I called up Brandon a few days later and asked, 'You want to fly with your old man?'" Dennis says. "We had so much fun up there. We kept looking at each other during the flight and laughing."

Along with them on the historic flight was Dennis' wife and Brandon's mother, Crystal; Brandon's wife, Yasmine Yousef '13; and Brandon and Yasmine's daughter, Mina.

"Somehow, even though I still have 34 years left to go, I already know that I've had the pinnacle moment of my career," Brandon says.

Originally from Barbados, Dennis knew at an early age that he wanted to fly. Growing up, he was inspired by stories from a family friend who had moved to the U.S. to become a pilot.

"Flying is just something that's a part of me," Dennis says.

Inspired by his father's legacy at Florida Tech, Brandon followed in his footsteps. He remembers reading his dad's old training books and being inspired by what he saw on the pages.

"I never wavered after that," Brandon says. "I just knew I wanted to do it."

Dennis may be close to retirement, but it has not slowed him down.

"Every day, I pinch myself because I'm getting paid to do what I love: travel the world," he says.

When he isn't flying his normal routes to Aruba, Dennis is teaching professionalism and leadership classes for American Airlines.

Meanwhile, Brandon's career is just getting started.

"As I'm walking through the terminals, I see excited families together about to go on vacations, homesick people crying on the phone, passengers running by trying to catch their flight, and girls' trips in their matching outfits," Brandon says. "I know that my job is helping them do something that they need to do or want to do. I'm getting them somewhere that they want to be, and that gives me a lot of satisfaction in my position."





Club Spotlight

Women in Aviation

Dedicated to the advancement of women in all aviation-related fields, the Women in Aviation International (WAI) organization offers members many networking opportunities with both pilot and nonpilot aviation workers, as well as the U.S. Air Force.

“This organization gives women a spotlight in a male-dominated field,” said Emily Summey, WAI Space Coast Florida Tech chapter president. “It grows a community of support between women who face similar challenges in their journey to their careers.”

The Space Coast Florida Tech Chapter has hosted a variety of guest speakers with diverse backgrounds, as well as community-building activities, such as gingerbread house-making and major information nights. In June, the chapter hosted

FIT Aviation’s Summer Social in partnership with the Florida Tech Flight Team, Alpha Eta Rho and Endeavor Air, offering free discovery flights.

Some members also traveled to Long Beach, California, in February to attend the annual WAI Conference.

“I love being a member, because there are so many amazing women that pour out support and advice into those just beginning their careers,” Summey said. “I have met many lifelong friends and mentors through this organization, and I encourage others to find these connections, as well. Our WAI chapter is excited to grow—we have fun and exciting plans for this year and are hopeful to bring some new faces to our meetings.”



Five Questions With: *Emily Summey*

Serving as Women in Aviation president and Alpha Eta Rho event coordinator, while also working as the operations control coordinator at FIT Aviation, Emily Summey is an involved COA student. We sat down to talk to her about her goals, her favorite experience at Florida Tech and what she views as a Florida Tech staple.

1: What are you studying at Florida Tech?

I’m studying both aviation management with flight and air traffic control. I also do flight training at FIT Aviation and am currently working toward my commercial license.

2: What is your goal for the future?

My goal for the future is to become a flight instructor and then, an airline pilot. I hope to one day fly internationally and combine my career with my love for traveling the world.

3: What has been your favorite experience at Florida Tech?

Florida Tech has provided so many amazing opportunities and experiences! It’s hard to choose just one, but I would say working orientation week as a resident assistant was one of the most memorable. I had the opportunity to welcome the incoming freshmen and build their excitement for Florida Tech. That week was filled with school spirit, and getting to contribute to that was so fun.

4: In your opinion, what is a Florida Tech staple?

A Florida Tech staple that remains a favorite of mine is the botanical garden. I love detouring through the garden between classes as a way to reset during a hectic day. There are also tables that make for a quiet and calm place to study or catch up on homework.

5: When you’re not studying, what do you like to do?

When I’m not studying, I like to plan events for the organizations on campus! This year, I have the opportunity to serve as the president of Women in Aviation and the event coordinator of Alpha Eta Rho. Both of these positions fill my time with planning and attending fun events! Outside of the organizations, I love to run, play tennis and go to the beach.

Happenings

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK



In February, Florida Tech hosted its first International Education Week, during which College of Aeronautics alumnus Juan Moreno '87 spoke to Panthers in the Gleason Performing Arts Center. Moreno discussed his experience as an international student at Florida Tech and how it has shaped him as an adult and leader with Delta Air Lines.

REVAMPED FLIGHT TRAINING LAB LOOKS TO BOOST AVIATION EXPERIENCE



Led by Rian Mehta '13, '15 MSA, '17 Ph.D., College of Aeronautics assistant dean, the newly upgraded Basic Attitude Training Device (BATD) Lab contains six high-performance systems equipped with Prepar3D, an open visual simulation platform that allows users to create aviation training scenarios. Students can

practice basic flying, and nonflight students can put what they're learning in the classroom into (virtual) practice via these desktop simulators.

Closed due to the pandemic, the 15-year-old lab was reimagined with new, high-performance computers, control units and software, along with new furniture and a large-screen TV.

OPEN HOUSE

In conjunction with Homecoming, each of Florida Tech's four colleges hosted an open house. The College of Aeronautics Open House took place March 24 on the first floor of George M. Skurla Hall. Student organizations, such as Women in Aviation, the Florida Tech Flight Team, Drone Club and College Aviation Business Executives, set up tables to showcase their groups to prospective members.



PANTHER FLIGHT FEST



In April, FIT Aviation hosted Panther Flight Fest: a full day of speakers, static aircraft displays, display booths and more. As part of the displays, two U.S. Air Force A-10 Warthogs stopped by—one of which was piloted by College of Aeronautics alumna Capt. Lindsay "MAD" Johnson '22 MSA.

Johnson gave two presentations. The Women in Aviation club sponsored the first, which focused on encouraging aspiring female aviators. The second focused on the capabilities of the A-10 Warthog.

BUILDING THE FLEET: 8 NEW PIPER AIRCRAFT FOR FLIGHT TRAINING



Eight 2025 Piper Pilot 100i aircraft equipped with the latest electronic avionics will be added to the fleet at FIT Aviation, as Florida Tech continues to infuse new technology into its popular flight training programs.

The \$3.2 million, future-facing acquisition, approved by the university's board of trustees in January, will bring the number of aircraft in the FIT Aviation fleet to nearly 40.

"At Florida Tech, we understand the power and promise of integrating the newest technology as a teaching tool," President John Nicklow said. "I am excited about how these new planes will enhance our already stellar flight programs and better prepare our students for success. We also know technology doesn't mean much if there aren't dedicated and passionate teachers and mentors to help explain it, and our flight instructors and staff ensure that happens at the highest level."

Planes such as the 100i, featuring all-glass avionics—think digital screens, not physical gauges and dials—will be used for instrument rating and commercial pilot training programs.

"The purchase is important because it reflects the level of commitment the university has for the remarkable changes happening on the flight line," said Jay Arcemont, deputy executive director at FIT Aviation.



SPRING CAREER FAIR



The College of Aeronautics hosted its spring Career Fair in March. Held in the Charles and Ruth Clemente Center for Sports and Recreation, the fair welcomed students and alumni to practice their networking skills and learn about various career

opportunities. Some employers in attendance included Envoy Air, Piedmont Airlines, SkyWest Airlines, Tradewind Aviation and Endeavor Air.

AAAE/ACC AIRPORT PLANNING DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SYMPOSIUM



In March, three students represented the College of Aeronautics at the AAAE/ACC Airport Planning Design & Construction Symposium in Anaheim, California.

Navya Nikita Agasam '22 MSA, Hope Ann Erlwein '22, '23 MSA, and Tejas Krsna Rachur '22 MSA, led by professor Debbie Carstens '96 MBA, presented the first-place project in environmental interactions for the

national competition for the ACRP. They were proud to represent another member of their team, Alfa Ekele, who sadly passed away last year.

The project, "Implementing Alternative, Renewable Energy Sources for Ground-Based Airport Operations," introduced a system that can obtain and convert low-cost degradable wastes into usable fuels for powering airport vehicles, the airport environment and producing gas for aircraft ground running.

"I feel that learning is far too theoretical for students, so this project provides students a means to apply learned classroom concepts to the real world," Carstens said.

LIGHTS, CAMERA—DEATON!

College of Aeronautics dean John Deaton will play a key role in "The Twilight Years," a movie from Brevard County-based Atlantic Studios that is scheduled to film in Melbourne in January 2024.

The film is an "intense drama" that looks at a family riven by a granddaughter's struggles with thanatophobia—a chronic and often debilitating fear of dying—and her grandmother's struggles with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Deaton plays the grandmother's husband.

This is not the first time in the spotlight for the retired U.S. Navy commander and longtime Florida Tech professor. As a young man living in San Diego,

Deaton was cast in Douglas Sirk's "The Tarnished Angels," starring Rock Hudson, Robert Stack and Dorothy Malone and based on William Faulkner's book, *Pylon*.

Deaton would later star as the disciple Thomas in the stage production "Living Last Supper," a depiction of Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting brought to life.



"Acting affords you the opportunity to be someone else, at least for a short time," he said. "I think getting into the role of someone else, with different circumstances, makes you appreciate what life throws at you and how we can overcome those challenges."

Coming next for Deaton is the role of "Father John" in Atlantic Studios' "Starting Over." The movie is a comedy about online dating over age 50.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND ESTABLISHED FOR AVIATION-LOVING ALUMNUS



The Air Charter Safety Foundation (ACSF) has established a scholarship in honor of its first safety director, Russ Lawton '74 A.S., '76, who passed away Jan. 14 at age 70 after a prolonged illness.

Lawton graduated from Florida Tech with a bachelor's degree in air commerce with flight technology. He was later recognized with the university's Outstanding Alumni award for his contributions to aviation safety.

The ACSF has pledged to honor Lawton's legacy by creating the Russ S. Lawton Scholarship. Donations are being accepted. The scholarship fund will support an annual scholarship for undergraduate students in the College of Aeronautics who need financial assistance and who plan to pursue a career in flight safety. Recipients will be selected by the Office of Financial Aid.

After graduation from Florida Tech, Lawton pursued his passion by working for more than a decade for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) and the AOPA Air Safety Foundation, ultimately becoming vice president of operations. From 1987 to 2000, Lawton was an analyst and consultant for Events Analysis Inc. & Advanced Aviation Concepts, where he assisted the National Transportation Safety Board and the FAA on safety initiatives.

In 2006, he became the first full-time employee of the ACSF, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that supports the highest safety standards for more than 300 aviation-focused businesses, charter and fractional operators. Starting as director of safety management and later named vice president of operations, Lawton remained at the ACSF until his passing.

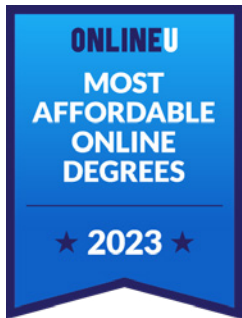
"Russ Lawton had a huge passion for aviation safety. His love of learning and being a true educator is what he did best. He always wanted to give back to those who worked hard and became leaders within our industry," said ACSF president Bryan Burns. "A true gentleman and beloved industry colleague, Russ was respected for his vision, leadership, integrity, knowledge and strong advocacy for our aviation safety community."



College of Aeronautics

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A+ Accolades



FLORIDA TECH RANKS AMONG MOST AFFORDABLE ONLINE MASTER'S DEGREES IN AVIATION

Florida Tech's online aviation master's degree ranked in the top 10 most affordable master's degrees in aviation in 2023, according to university ranking website OnlineU.

Coming in fifth place, Florida Tech was one of three private universities on the list, along with Capitol Technology University, which ranked ninth, and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, which ranked tenth. Florida Tech also ranked above the University of North Dakota, which ranked eighth.

To be eligible, schools had to meet the following requirements:

- The institution has fully online degrees that meet degree requirements for a given ranking.
- The school is institutionally accredited.
- The school meets online representation requirements.

OnlineU then ranked each university by manually researching the online tuition for 2022–23.

While not specifically mentioned in the ranking, Florida Tech offers two online master's programs in aviation: Aviation Safety, MSA, and Aviation Management, MSA. Each 30-credit degree costs \$18,600, or about \$9,300 a year.

"Our motto has been, and continues to be, to offer quality graduate education at an affordable cost," said John Deaton, College of Aeronautics dean. "Our graduate degrees are designed specifically to prepare students for competitive careers in the aviation industry."

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—John Deaton,
College of Aeronautics dean