



Pilot Training/Supply Issues: The University Aviation Perspective

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Issues

- Recruitment and Selection
- Physical Resources
- Instructors
- Funding
- Training Goals and Objectives
- Congruence with University Goals



Recruitment and Selection

- No shortage of interested students
- Universities do not screen for aviation aptitude
 - Not part of standard admissions policies
 - May not be legal (state schools)
- Result – high attrition rate in flight training
 - Note: Instructor assets are disproportionately absorbed by washouts/dropouts



Physical Resources

- No shortage of classrooms
- Shortage of faculty in some areas
- Lack of funds to modernize training fleets
 - Many using old “steam gauge” aircraft
 - Aircraft do not reflect air carrier equipment
 - E.g., 1985 Seminole vs 2007 DA-42
 - Lack of modern, flexible simulators
 - Typically, legacy GA sims like Frasca 141/142
 - Ability to simulate operational fleet as well as larger turbine multicrew aircraft



Instructors

- Instructors are almost all recent grads
 - Regionals hiring faster than we can create
 - Instructor experience levels rapidly declining
 - Virtually no real-world flying experience
- Issues
 - Recent grads aren't interested in being instructors
 - Instructor pay is poor, no benefits



Funding

- Cost of 4-year university flight education is \$120K-180K
- Students cannot borrow that much
 - Government loans limited to about \$25K total
 - Debt load incompatible with initial pay
- Narrows field of candidates
 - Impacts diversity
 - Adds to dropout rates



Training Goals and Objectives

- Disparity between airline needs and university products
 - Current system produces light GA SPIFR pilots
 - Airlines want large turbine aircraft multicrew pilots
- Need to revisit licensing and certification process and adjust training accordingly
 - Note: This will end the production of CFI's!



Congruence with University Goals

- Aviation education undergoing sea change in direction
 - Past: Essentially vocational training program producing pilots and managers
 - Future: Academic discipline aimed towards research and education
 - Faculty changing from Master's-level teachers to PhD-level researchers (promotion/tenure)
- University administrations will not accept becoming merely pilot academies



Solutions?

- Instructors
 - Change paradigm
 - Encourage career instructors with better pay/benefits
 - Encourage second-career instructors from air carrier and military retirees
 - Age 65 doesn't help!
 - Improved efficiencies should help offset increased costs
 - Decreased attrition in university training
 - Decreased attrition and retraining at regionals



Solutions

- Funding: End-users will have to share cost burden
 - Direct funding of university programs
 - European style “cadet” programs
- Training goals
 - Shift training to MCPL model
 - Beware impact on pool of new instructors!
 - Incorporate PABC certification model
 - Encourage more “real-world” flying in training
 - ...which “fits” with FITS
 - Recognize impact on recent grad CFI force



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Questions?

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