

Testimony to the Pennsylvania State Appropriations and Education Committees

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Good morning, Mr. or Madam Chair and members of the committee. I am Ursula Tierney, an aviation faculty member and proud alumni representing the Professional Piloting program in the James M. Johnson School of Aviation Sciences here at Community College of Beaver County.

Thank you for allowing me to speak today about aviation education in Pennsylvania and beyond.

In July of 1969, James M. Johnson saw an ad in an aviation publication advertising a position for the coordinator of a professional pilot program at the Community College of Beaver County. He sent a resume and was invited for an interview. He was then offered the position, accepted, and began working in August at our first campus in downtown Freedom, PA. The first professional pilot class had six students.

I say all of this to let you know where we started, in comparison to where we are today. From downtown Freedom with classes in old, abandoned buildings, by way of converted hangers at Beaver County airport, to the Aviation Sciences Center at the Beaver County Airport, and now looking at futuristic new facilities to meet the needs of a demanding industry.

With a nationwide aircraft pilot, flight engineers and control tower specialist shortage, training the aviation industry's next generation of workers is more important now than ever. Demand for air travel is expected to be strong in the coming years, and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment opportunities for airline pilots and flight engineers will grow 14% from 2020 to 2030, with 14,500 openings for pilots each year.

From the beginnings of an unknown community college in Beaver County, we now have two programs that are nationally recognized for the quality of professional graduates produced to bridge the gap between today's issues and the future workforce in the aviation industry.

Did you know?

- CCBC has placed pilots with every major airline and air traffic controllers in every tower nationwide.
- CCBC partners with Southern Illinois University to offer aviation bachelor's degrees on-site at the Beaver County Airport.
- American Airlines recognized CCBC consecutively as a top aviation college.

The professional pilot program, an FAA approved pilot school, where each student who successfully completes the program obtains a minimum of a commercial pilot certificate with a multi-engine land and instrument rating and certified flight instructor certification. Each graduate looks forward to a lucrative career as airline pilots, air taxi pilots, corporate pilots, instructor pilots, or military pilots. With industry demand, graduates are now entertaining airline offers at 21 years of age and 1,250 hours' worth of flight time and their associate in applied science degree earned right here at CCBC.

The air traffic control program began in 1976 and the control tower at the Beaver County Airport began operation in November 1977. The tower was constructed by Beaver County with the architectural and professional engineering work performed by CCBC faculty members.

This was the first and still is, the only control tower in the United States which is operated, equipped, and staffed by an accredited college where students are earning a Control Tower Operator certificate with facility rating. This program is recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration as the best program in the United States and many agreements have been signed with CCBC to ensure qualified students are placed on a preferred hiring list at a FAA air traffic control facility.

Our offerings don't stop there.

Largely based on business curriculum the aerospace management program began in 1985. This program allows those who are already employed in this industry to earn a college degree to enhance their upward mobility.

Our new advanced piloting program allows a pilot to start with second semester coursework after transferring with a Private Pilot certificate.

We also offer pathways for juniors and seniors in high school to begin training as pilots, air traffic controllers, or aerospace managers through our Aviation High School Academy where students can earn college credits early and potentially flying planes before driving cars.

What started with one instructor and one staff person in 1969, has expanded to 30 full and part-time instructors and staff.

What started with six students (employed by no one) in 1969, has grown to enrollment representing all fifty of the counties in Pennsylvania, and 25 other states. We have alumni at every airline, FAA and FAA ATC facilities, corporations, air taxi operations, fixed based operators, the military, and the defense industry.

The success of any educational program and the vitality of any industry is directly attributed to the success of the graduates filling those jobs. In that regard, CCBC's James M. Johnson School of Aviation Sciences is extremely successful.

But, what about the future of aviation and our workforce?

I can assure you that with industry demand, the college's commitment, and the Commonwealth's support and involvement, we will continue to **lead, improve, and innovate** aviation education

and do it at a third to half the cost of other colleges, universities, and training facilities. Plus, with transfer partners like Geneva College, Robert Morris University, and Southern Illinois University) and 11 statewide flight training providers, we look forward to preparing even more students with faculty who have spent a lifetime in aviation, advanced simulation, and other teaching strategies to ingrain complex competencies in both ATC and flying.

CCBC will continue to be the aviation educators that other institutions use as the standard and that industry comes to for best trained aviation professionals.

Thank you.