AVIATION GROUP MEETING NOTES

Friday, May 4, 2018

A meeting with faculty and other program stakeholders was conducted on May 4th to discuss the aviation and avionics program needs in our region. The meeting included a review of program related labor market data, plans/wishes for expansion, potential industry partners, and ideas for future Strong Workforce funding. In attendance were:

David Casillas, San Bernardino Valley College

Chris Ohshita, Victor Valley College

Sid Burks, CSU San Bernardino

Lisa Kiplinger-Kennedy, Inland Empire/Desert Region Consortium

Avante Simmons, Mt. San Jacinto College

Michael Good, Temecula Valley High School, AFJROTC

Mark McLouth, Rubidoux High School, AFJROTC

Larry McLaughlin, Inland Empire/Desert Region Consortium

Meeting began at 1:30 with a review and discussion of the labor market data pertaining to aviation occupations and industry segments. A number of companies currently partnering with the programs represented were mentioned along with others known to be hiring trained aviation technicians (largely A&P qualified) and avionics in our region. Companies mentioned include:

* ComAv, Northrop Gruman, Unical, Pulsar Aviation, F&E (Amazon), UTC, SkyWest, General Atomics, and GE Aviation.

Specific interests that have been expressed to some in attendance include:

* SB Worldwide Wings – is (or proposes to) partner with San Bernardino Valley to conduct flight training – SBV would do ground school and Worldwide would do the pilot training.
* Old Sheriff’s Station with airstrip in Thermal – available for an aviation-related educational program.

San Bernardino Valley College wants to build a flight operations and management degree; currently doing dual enrollment. Sprigg Charter may be interested in partnering.

It was noted that Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) certification is the most essential industry credential. A&P actually consists of two FAA certifications.

It was announced by Chris Ohshita that Victor Valley College plans to launch its new Composites Certificate in September – it will consist of 17 units. David Casillas said that San Bernardino would like to do an add-on in Composites.

Lisa Kiplinger-Kennedy added that Victor Valley College has partnered with General Atomics to pursue an apprenticeship grant which would include funding additional equipment for the current A&P, Composites, and (hopefully soon) avionics programs. It would also increase the amount of available apprenticeships available at General Atomics.

The prerequisite skills for Avionics was discussed. San Bernardino Valley and Chaffey College have avionics programs. Both offer 3 to 4 courses after students master basic electronics. San Bernardino Valley has had difficulty keeping their avionics courses enrolled because electronics students become employed before coming over.

All agreed that identifying qualified faculty may be a hindrance to expanding existing programs or starting new.

The discussion turned to outreach with high school students and establishing aviation career pathways:

Sid Burks shared information about the Coachella valley Youth Aviation Program and the success they’ve experienced engaging students. This program makes it possible for youth to obtain their pilot’s license. He also talked about the Experimental Aircraft Association’s “Young Eagles” program. He advised that both pilot and mechanical training programs are expensive to start.

Michael Good and Mark McLouth spoke about the Air Force Junior ROTC program and the emphasis on creating good student citizens through community involvement and public service. Aerospace education is one of the program tracks. They have students 1 hour per day – many of their activities are extra-curricular. More recently, the program has focused on STEM instruction using RC aircraft, drones, rocketry, and flight simulators.

Larry McLaughlin closed the meeting by identifying three common threads in the discussion:

1. The college programs have difficulty meeting the demand for employment which, at times, interferes with program completion.
2. More can be done to establish pathways from aviation-related high school and youth programs to college level programs. Drones, RC model planes, and rocketry can generate interest and a low-cost point of entry.
3. Flight simulators engage students and are needed by existing programs.

Everyone seemed interested in collaborating going forward and agreed to continue the dialog through conference calls and future meetings.