Assessment of the Aviation Program

Assessment of the overall aviation program and of the student learning outcomes for both the aeronautical science major and the aviation management major is conducted continuously by staff and faculty. A formal assessment report is written each spring and is submitted to the Faculty Assessment Committee.

The outcomes for both majors are listed on the aviation portion of the Rocky Mountain College website under “Learning Outcomes.”

Measures employed during assessment include:

- End of year surveys from all students
- Exit surveys from each graduating senior
- Formal survey of graduates, conducted approximately every four years
- Informal survey of graduates, conducted in an on-going manner
- Surveys and evaluations from internship supervisors
- Evaluations from outsider aviation professionals who conduct mock interviews with each graduating senior as part of AVS 400 class
- Evaluation of student performance by experience industry pilot in AVS 404: Crew Resource Management course
- Data from Safety Program, including student inputs to SMART software, which tracks safety reporting
- Performance on FAA written tests, to include breakdown of scores for each category of information tested
- Performance of FAA practical tests in the airplane, conducted by FAA personnel or by Designated Pilot Examiners
- Feedback on student performance in AVS 405 course, a senior capstone course
- Feedback on student performance in individual required courses directly relating to specific outcomes, such as aviation law, meteorology, air traffic control, and ethics

Summary of assessment “Intended Use of Results” for the aeronautical science major:

1. The company that administers the formal Federal Aviation Administration written tests now gives up specific feedback on student performance. We know exact scores for all students as a group on each subject area of each test, so classroom professors now target specific weak areas in their course, as identified by the FAA. This is a significant source of assessment because the FAA is the ultimate standard bearer.

   This past year we rewrote the commercial pilot flight training syllabus to include more cross country navigation in the simulator, which should produce better prepared students in CRM next year when they reach that senior level course.

2. The new commercial pilot syllabus has increased training in glass cockpit cross country navigation. The new simulator manager, a retired airline pilot, has also improved teaching of technology. Flight Operations received new scheduling software last fall
through a grant, which has improved student flight and simulator scheduling, resulting in better use of both round dial and glass cockpit simulators.

3. An airline transport pilot, hired as our simulator manager, taught AVS 150: Meteorology this year, which was a step forward because of his ability to connect the classroom theory with the real world of aviation. Continuity between him, instrument simulator training, and meteorology class has established a better foundation earlier in the student’s education.

4. AVS 410: Advanced Aerodynamics, an elective course, will be offered this coming year. We have started talking it up, expecting stronger enrollment. Time in private pilot ground school on this topic was increased this year. We’ll closely watch FAA testing results, now that we can see those.

5. Alumni survey shows solid understanding of aircraft systems when they reach the industry. Dispatch curriculum has been improved and more emphasis placed on obtaining the training, so one year from now, we should have more feedback about systems knowledge from FAA dispatch examiner. Pilot examiners are pleased.

6. Knowledge of business practices was included in alumni survey. Career services evaluation form for internships doesn’t specifically include a question about business principles, which we will try to have included. It does ask about general academic training. We have received more unsolicited requests from companies looking to hire our graduates, and we’ve pushed that information to students more aggressively this year so they see the importance of this topic and the importance of having industry experience even before graduation.

7. Professionalism was included this year on alumni survey. Guest speakers were brought in this year at an increased rate.

8. Guest speakers were told to discuss ethics as part of their talks on professionalism and the industry. We will continue to emphasize this.

9. Our CRM capstone course has improved significantly with the addition of our new simulator program manager, who has especially emphasized communications in Line Oriented Flight Training. This area has taken a significant step forward this year.

Summary of assessment “Intended Use of Results” for the aviation management major:

1. The business program, including one professor who teaches half-time in business and half-time in aviation management, reviewed the entire business curriculum this year and are moving toward one combined accounting course, which agrees with the suggestion made by the Aviation Industry Advisory Committee. AVS 400 capstone course has one more lesson on HR and interview skills and one of the mock interviews for each student is an employee in RMC HR.
2. AVS 405 capstone simulation exercise has students taking more responsibility for learning and decision-making. The professor also is considering changes in the grading to improve involvement. Business topics were included in alumni survey. Career services evaluation form for internships doesn’t specifically include a question about business principles, which we will try to have included. It does ask about general academic training. We have received more unsolicited requests from companies looking to hire our graduates, and we’ve pushed that information to students more aggressively this year so they see the importance of this topic and the importance of having industry experience even before graduation.

3. An airline transport pilot, hired as our simulator manager, taught AVS 150: Meteorology this year, which was a step forward because of his ability to connect the classroom theory with the real world of aviation. Continuity between him and meteorology class has established a better foundation earlier in the student’s education.

   New AVS 170 syllabus, introductory flight lab for aviation management majors, is in place and working well. Students get a broad exposure to flight operations at no cost through various back seat flights and simulator observations.

4. Critical-thinking exercises are emphasized across the curriculum and spoken about by guest speakers.

5. Lessons learned briefings to freshmen about internships are very much a part of our culture. They improve the learning done on internships. Multiple companies contact us throughout the year about internships. We’ve had a particularly strong year with airports in Montana, with students gaining airport management internships at West Yellowstone, Bozeman, and Kalispell. This area is very strong.

6. Professionalism was included this year on alumni survey. Guest speakers were brought in this year at an increased rate. Mock interviews were conducted by the chief pilot at Horizon Airlines, and he was the guest speaker at the Awards Banquet. A strong emphasis was placed on professionalism.

7. Guest speakers were told to discuss ethics as part of their talks on professionalism and the industry. We will continue to emphasize this.

8. New exercise added to AVS 400 to practice oral communication in front of peers.