

# SAAC NOTAM

-Notice To Aviation Majors-

THE OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSLETTER OF THE  
JOHN D. ODEGARD SCHOOL OF AEROSPACE SCIENCES

Photo: Paul Wesp

## Pilot Pathway Survey Update

Earlier this semester, Professors Shayne Daku and Kent Lovelace conducted a survey surrounding the topic of Pilot Pathway Programs. The research has since been presented to various industry groups and represents a unique look at student views on the pathway options available to them. SAAC believes pathway programs are a great opportunity for students, so we have highlighted a few points from this research that we feel are significant to students.

Some of the findings were unsurprising, yet important for industry and college leaders to understand.

- Students want to see a clear advantage compared to traditional hiring.

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- The two most important factors to students were bases, followed closely by timeline to a major airline. Other factors included benefits (both as a cadet and when employed), pay, and quality of life.
- The level of student interest in a program correlated to the amount of “face time” on campus.
- The majority of students agree that pathway programs will accelerate their career.
- Around 2/3 of students say that they intend on joining a pathway program.
- Students feel they are able to find information about programs and do not feel overwhelmed by the number of programs.

## Pathway Update Continued

There were some unexpected results however:

- Only around 1/3 of students are currently in a pathway program. This participation follows academic progress, with those further along in training being more likely to participate. Despite this, participation in pathway programs is still relatively low.
- Many respondents indicated they believed the agreements limited them to that airline. This is not the case for the majority of programs.
- Students were given the option to rank their pathway preferences. Despite students feeling educated about their options, 70% indicated a first choice of program, 65% indicated a second choice, and 59% indicated a third choice. This drop off could indicate a lack of awareness on the parts of the students, counter to the results saying they felt informed of their options, or simply apathy towards their options.

For major airlines, the top three most desired programs were Delta Propel, Fedex Purple Runway, and United Career Pathway Program. At the regional level, the top three choices were SkyWest, Republic, and Endeavor. These results are primarily based on geographics because the number one reason given for choosing a pathway was base location.

It makes sense that the most popular regional options have bases in the Midwest since the largest single group of students is from the Upper Midwest.



Photo: Paul Wesp

Pilot pathway programs are an indicator of the state of the industry, with pilots in high demand. These programs represent a significant opportunity for students moving onto their future careers, but they will evolve over time. Changing economic conditions, industry upheaval, and program success will all impact the longevity of these programs. Students should do their best to stay updated on the options available to them, and recognize that this opportunity won't be around forever.

# FedEx Takeover Recap

On March 27th, UND held their first FedEx Takeover Day, where representatives of FedEx and their regional partners visited UND. They promoted the FedEx Purple Runway pathway program, visited a variety of aviation classes, held two meet-and-greets for students to learn more about flying for FedEx, and awarded the FedEx Purple Runway Scholarships.

The \$5,000 scholarships were given to 20 students who will be taking 414/415/416 in the upcoming year. FedEx has committed to awarding these scholarships for a total of 5 years. To be eligible, students must be taking 414/415/416 within the next year, have a 2.5 GPA, have at least a PPL, and be a US Citizen or permanent resident. Preference is given to women and minority students, and students are required to get a letter of recommendation from a current faculty member.



The FedEx scholarship represents a new approach to help alleviate the pilot shortage. While many airlines have introduced pilot pathway programs, FedEx is the only airline to have sought to help reduce the financial barriers to people becoming instructors at the collegiate level. We welcome this approach, and encourage students to take advantage of this opportunity.

## Fleet Transition Update

UND is nearing completion of the transition to an all Piper fleet, with more Archers being delivered this week and weekly through mid-June. All undergraduate flight courses will be taught in the Archer from this summer onwards.

Recently, an Archer was flown to Phoenix. This is to allow UND's Phoenix operation to begin standardizing their CFI's, in order for them to start conducting flight training in Archers. The Archers that are slated to go to Phoenix are 2016 models and have around 2500 hours on them.

While there has been frustration this semester over Archer availability, the number of Archers at Grand Forks is not expected to change. To understand this decision it is important to examine how UND decides how many aircraft to buy.



## Fleet Transition Update Continued

UND expects each airplane to fly roughly 1200 hours a year. They then divide the number of flight hours for the upcoming fiscal year by 1200, which gives the number of aircraft required to meet their expectations. For FY2020, UND expects to fly 80,296 hours in single engine aircraft, which when divided by 1200 equals 66.9 aircraft. UND has used this formula for multiple years, and it has proved to be an accurate way to forecast the number of aircraft they will need.



Much of the availability issues have to do with short term pressures rather than a shortage of aircraft. For example, if we have a stretch of good weather following a period of bad weather, many aircraft might be sent to maintenance, causing a short term pressure. Some of this also has to do with “launch hoarding” or the practice of putting in launches beyond what you intend to use. While this can seem like a contingency plan, it is important to remember that every launch scheduled cannot be used by someone else.

Weather and training delays can be frustrating, but hoarding launches adds yet another obstacle for students to finish their flight courses.

Ultimately, the number of aircraft at UND is determined by their utilization. If UND is short on aircraft, this will be shown through the number of flight hours they fly, not in how much they are scheduled.

## Aerospace Picnic

SAAC's yearly aerospace student-faculty picnic will be held on May 3rd this year. Stop by the Robin Hall UAS Hangar for lunch, games, prizes, and good company. Pulled pork sandwiches will be served from 11:00AM to 1:00PM free of charge.

Barring unforeseen poor weather, we'll have several outdoor games to play and enjoy the nice, warm weather. We hope to see you there!

### Contact SAAC:

Website:

[saac.aero.und.edu](http://saac.aero.und.edu)

Email:

[saacskyward@gmail.com](mailto:saacskyward@gmail.com)

Facebook:

**Student Aviation Advisory Council**

Suggestion Box:

**Odegard 101**

Meetings:

**Sundays at 4:00PM Odegard 106**