Pennsylvania
College of Technology
A Penn State Affiliate

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AVIATION NEWS

SPRING 2022

Recent aviation alumnus awarded memorial scholarship

A recent graduate of Pennsylvania College of Technology's aviation program has been awarded a Helicopter Association International scholarship that provides a tuition waiver for a manufacturer training school and a stipend to offset expenses.

John J. Doherty, of Lebanon, who earned a bachelor's degree in aviation maintenance technology in May, received a first-place Bill Sanderson Aviation Maintenance Technology award from HAI.

Doherty, now employed by Life Lion Emergency Medical Services in Hershey, has opted to attend the Safran/Turbomeca turbine engine school.

The scholarship honors William C. Sanderson, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate and HAI's former director of heliports and technical programs, who died in April 2004.

Aviation maintenance student awarded $1,000 scholarship

A first-year student at Pennsylvania College of Technology has been awarded a Viasat Technology/Maintenance Scholarship from Women in Corporate Aviation.

The $1,000 award to Alicia Martinez, an aviation maintenance technology major from Allentown, was presented at the National Business Aviation Association's recent Business Aviation Convention and Exhibition in Las Vegas. Viasat provides the scholarship to assist a student attending a Federal Aviation Administration Part 147 school to attain Airframe and Powerplant or avionics-related certification.

"She is a very good student who is focused on her education," said William F. Stepp III, an associate professor who taught Martinez in his Fundamentals of Aviation I class earlier this semester. "She gets along with others and strives to do her best."

WCA is a nonprofit association for professionals in corporate and business aviation, providing networking, mentoring, scholarships and educational opportunities for current and future corporate/business aviation professionals.

Pennsylvania College of Technology Aviation program awarded grant

In December of 2021, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) awarded Pennsylvania College of Technology over $200,000 for the college's Aviation Workforce Success Project (AWSP). The main objectives of AWSP are to attract new aviation technicians and retain them in the industry.

Three of the AWSP objectives are of particular interest to high school students, teachers, and counselors.

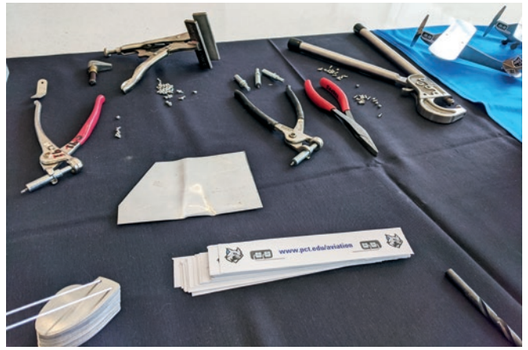
Pre-College Program and Weekend Mini-Camps

The Penn College pre-college program is a four-day camp for high school students. Participants learn about the materials used to build airplanes, try their hands at some minor repairs, and how to start the engines on an airliner. The program finishes with tours of nearby aviation museums. Thanks to the grant, these camps will be presented at no charge to the participants. In addition, participants receive a scholarship worth $2,000 toward an associates degree and $4,000 toward a bachelors-degree. The end result: students will get paid $500 per semester. Essentially, students are getting paid for attending the camp!

The mini camps, also provided at no charge, are a shorter version of the pre-college program. Students will get as much hands-on experience with aircraft as time allows in the two day format.

High School Teacher-Counselor Externships

Teacher-counselor externships are week-long programs for teachers to get an overview of the aviation industry, learn the types of technology used in aviation, participate in engaging hands-on activities, and demonstrations. During the externship, participants will receive sample lesson plans which can be adapted for use at their home school.



Camp-in-a-Box tools and materials

Camp-in-a-Box Aviation Kits

Tooling and materials will be shipped to schools for students to build model aircraft. The materials and tools in the kit are the same as used by technicians in the aviation industry. Each model takes less than 15 minutes to construct. Preparation for the supervising teachers or counselors takes the same amount of time. Penn College plans to send these kits to schools in areas with underserved populations. After the school receives a kit, a Penn College aviation faculty member will visit the school, either virtually or in person, to make a presentation to go along with the kit building.

Interested in learning more?

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PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

EXPERIENCE ACQUIRED

Student takes lead in repainting aircraft.

Recent Alumnus, Kate M. Ruggiero punctuated her academic performance with a larger-than-life mic drop: impressively taking the lead in repainting a single-engine Cessna 175C airplane donated to the Lumley Aviation Center nine years ago.

Ruggiero earned an associate degree in aviation technology from Penn College in December 2021, crossing the stage in a COVID-delayed ceremony on May 15, and moved from Easton, PA to Michigan in early July to start a job as an aircraft paint specialist—working on corporate and private jets for Duncan Aviation in Battle Creek.

Employment is but the latest exciting step along Ruggiero's bustling path.

She was an award-winning campus leader and recipient of multiple industry scholarships, a Presidential Student Ambassador, and a Theta Phi Alpha sorority sister. And she's a self-described "Daddy's girl" who gleefully tag-teamed the teardown of an airplane carburetor during an early visit to Penn College with her father.

Painting is Ruggiero's foundational passion, but airplanes weren't always her palette. As a student at Easton Area High School and the Career Institute of Technology, she took automotive courses—including classes in collision and refinishing technology.

"I started doing welding, sheet-metal fabrication, spray-painting, and filling in dents. I wanted to just broaden my skills," she said. "Pennsylvania College of Technology caught my eye. I actually toured there originally for the collision repair program and automotive business management."

"Ever since I was little, my dad took me to a local airpark that's about five minutes from my house. They had fly-ins all the time, so he would take me there as a little girl, plus to different aviation museums," Ruggiero said. "He always had a passion for aviation and really supported the industry, and he carried that down to me."

Kate M. Ruggiero pictured by the Cessna C175 after repaint

She and father Mike visited the Lumley Aviation Center in Montoursville, where they met instructor Michael R. Robison and other faculty members, and followed up with a "shadow day" that provided a more intensive look at the campus's instructional labs.

"I had the pleasure of meeting Kate while she was exploring college majors," said William F. Stepp III, associate professor of aviation. "She impressed me by her depth of research and maturity."

The summer after her first year, Ruggiero took a summer job at Lancaster Aero in Smoketown, a maintenance, paint and body shop owned by Kendall N. Horst, a May 1997 graduate of the college's aviation technology major. Horst had just hired a specialist at his Lancaster County business, so Ruggiero didn't get the full hands-on experience.

"I got an inside look at what it's like to paint aircraft, though," she said. "I did some composite repairs and got to sit in the paint booth as the new guy was spraying, looking at his techniques. And I got to help lay out paint designs, too."

The paint bug would resurface in Ruggiero's final semester last fall, when a three-credit physics survey course was the only remaining stop on her road to that two-year degree.

"I didn't really want to leave the Aviation Center yet—I still wanted to be involved there—and I was studying and testing for my Airframe and Powerplant certification," she said. "So I asked if I would be able to paint one of the aircraft because I really wanted that experience beneath my belt."

She was readily assigned to refurbish the Cessna, donated in Spring 2013 by the alumni-laden Gable family.

Ruggiero's ability to prioritize, prepare and perform—from becoming Federal Aviation Administration-certified to finalizing the instructional aircraft's makeover to graduating—is no surprise to her faculty mentors.

"She is a conscientious, friendly and honest person who ensures all tasks are completed correctly, on time and to the highest standards without compromising safety," Stepp III said. "She can always be trusted to do her best and seek help or guidance if needed."

Ruggiero and Grace M. Snyder, of Lebanon, who graduated May 15, 2021 with a bachelor's degree in aviation maintenance technology, busily occupied themselves with the Cessna during the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters. (Snyder took some time away from the work early this year to concentrate on her senior project, and then jumped back in to help with the rebuild and final prep for spraying. She is now employed by Fly Advanced, Lititz PA.)

"From September to December, all that Grace and I were doing was complete disassembly—bringing it down to the fuselage," she explained about their meticulous game plan. "Typically, we don't take off the wings; we don't completely disassemble a tail. We just take off all the flight controls, and then we take off the cowling, and then the wheel pants.

Ruggiero also replaced all of the hardware, a nod to the thoroughness of the enterprise, and realigned inspection panels and other pieces for a professional, uniform look.

Ruggiero matches that effusive praise with pure humility, making sure to credit the nearly 30 students who lent a hand—a just-doing-my-job attitude that will serve her new employer well: "I'm just really glad that I could leave a little bit of a legacy."

Cessna C175 before repaint