



FocusFAA

Something for Everyone's Taste

May 13, 2013 – A year after inking an agreement with the University of Maryland, the FAA's Experiential Student Mentorship (ESM) Program is showing sustained results.

A second group of 12 college mentees began their spring semester this year at the FAA, spread out across the lines of business at Headquarters to use their talents in assisting with agency programs, while being exposed to the aviation field and gaining real-life work experience. Since the program began, two new mentees have begun working at the agency: one, as a full-time employee in the Office of Airport Safety and Standards, and the other as a full-time contractor supporting the Office of Security and Hazardous Materials.

"Intellectually, this position has been stimulating," said Ivania Morales, who is working in the Office of Audit and Evaluation. "I wish I had more time here."

"The FAA has shown me new ways to cultivate those skills and further develop myself as a professional and a person," Kenneth Bayton, working in the Office of Security, who wants to hone his communication and analytical skills for a possible job in sports media, management, or communications after college.

The ESM Program which is run year-round, is a win-win for all involved. It offers minorities, women, students with disabilities, and under-served students the opportunity to gain valuable real-world work experience, while in return, the FAA benefits from the enthusiasm and fresh perspectives of students at no cost to the agency.

"The mentorship program combines academic theory with real career-related work experiences," said Carlos Manduley, manager of the Hispanic Employment Program and senior adviser for educational partnerships in the Office of Civil Rights. "These hands-on experiences can provide invaluable training for students," he said.

Manduley has been instrumental in establishing links between the FAA and local universities. The ESM program is just one of several initiatives that fall under the Office of Civil Rights' Educational Partnership Initiative.



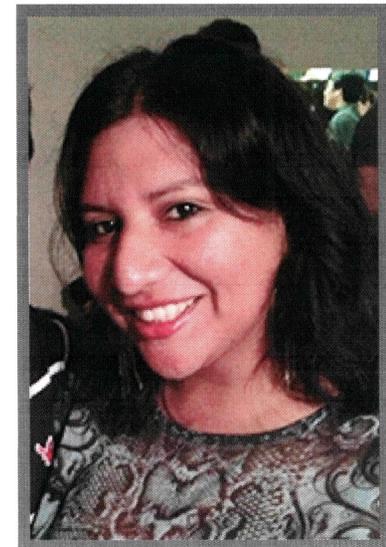
Attending a FAA information session at the University of Maryland campus were (from left) Joan Burton, director of the university's Federal Semester Program; Jeremy McDonald, FAA student mentorship alumni; current FAA mentees Jennifer Minor, Rochelle Samuel, and Brittany Repac; and Carlos Manduley.

Beyond refining their skills, participation in ESM has opened the eyes of mentees to possible job opportunities within the federal government, including the FAA. Some mentees have narrowed their interests to a specific field, while others have expanded theirs.

"Working at the FAA has broadened my view beyond ground vehicle alternative fuels and opened my eyes to the airspace, which is just as important," said Rochelle Samuel, who is working in the Office of Environment and Energy. "Working at the FAA has convinced me that I want to work in the government even more than I did before I came here."

That's music to her mentor's ears. Nathan Brown, the CLEEN program manager, was hoping to offer a young person an opportunity to learn. "It has been a pleasure and a benefit to me as well, giving me experience in management," said Brown.

Morales, the mentee in the Office of Audit and Evaluation, had been interested in creating public policy changes for social issues within the community. "Having experienced working in the federal





Mentee Meghan Scheffel is recognized by Mark Warren, FAA acting chief counsel, for her contributions to the agency's history project.

government, I find myself more open to the option of working and creating change on a different level," she said. "Before, I always thought I was going to go into the non-profit section. But now, I am considering working in the government."

The experience has been equally satisfying and enriching for Barbara Barnet, a senior investigator in the Office of Audit and Evaluation, who is mentoring Morales. Barnet began her career in the federal government 26 years ago as a student intern. "I enjoyed the chance to candidly share many of my personal experiences, positive and negative, pitfalls and plateaus, and roadblocks and opportunities that I encountered during my career — topics which I never really discuss. Actually, I wish I had someone, very early on in my career, to share the same information with me"

"The FAA has influenced my career path to lean toward specializing in engineering components for aircraft, instead of automotive engineering," said Brittany Repac, who is working on zero emission vehicles pilot program in the Office of Airports Planning and Environmental Planning. She also has been doing similar research on aircraft for the Airport Engineering Division.

"Before coming to the FAA, I thought I wanted to work for the federal government, and now I know that's ideally what I want to do," said Jacqueline Barnes is studying English and communications at college, but her assignments with the ATO's NextGen Office requiring technical and journalistic writing have been "a big switch." She believes there are plenty of avenues to explore at the agency, even for those not necessarily interested in aviation. "It's surprising what a student can learn and take away from working at the FAA," she said.

Jennifer Minor's experience as a mentee in the Office of Airport Safety and Standards not only confirmed her interest in working for the federal government, but changed her career outlook. "I previously never focused on geographic information systems as a career path, but after using and developing these GIS skills at the FAA, I am reconsidering and will likely pursue a similar job to that of my current internship."

That shouldn't sound surprising to her mentor, Michael McNerney, assistant manager in the Airport Engineering Division, who said Minor exceeded his expectations "and accomplished about twice as much as I expected." His office plans to participate in the ESM program again.

The mentee program seems to have opened up a wide world of possibilities for students — and for FAA managers looking for extra hands and fertile minds. Alexa Pierre, a mentee in the Office of Government and Industry Affairs, put it best: "There are so many different functions, such as business, marketing, government affairs, communication, safety, engineering. Basically, there is something for everyone's taste, and that is what I really appreciate about the FAA."

For more information about the student mentorship program, contact Carlos Manduley at carlos.manduley@faa.gov.



Alexa Pierre meets with Administrator Michael Huerta.

John Gielisch Although the most visible component of the FAA is the Air Traffic ATO
5 hours ago
Controllers, it gives the mentees a glimpse into many other parts of the FAA that are not so easily seen. Hopefully this does work as a recruiting tool to attract qualified people into all areas as they pursue individual career goals. Sounds like a great program that could be implemented at other places.

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