



WAI-University of Nebraska Omaha Studies Seek to Build Women in Aviation Ranks

Results to inform recruitment strategies and retention of women in aviation

March 6, 2020—Recognizing the global aviation industry is facing an unprecedented challenge to meet the hiring needs of aviation professionals in the workforce, Women in Aviation International worked with Dr. Becky Lutte, Associate Professor, University of Nebraska at Omaha Aviation Institute, on a series of studies to provide a current look at where the gaps in employment are for women in aviation. Together, the study results can be used by aviation companies and organizations globally to guide recruitment and retention strategies of women in their workforce.

(link to:

https://www.wai.org/sites/default/files/assets/Membership/women_in_aviation_workforce_2019_rlutte.pdf)

The first study *Women in the Aviation Workforce Report*, was completed in late Spring 2019. Findings of this study were augmented with a comprehensive study specifically focusing on recruitment and retention issues of women in the aviation industry. Both sets of results allow the industry to identify and target the areas where women are most underrepresented, to better understand why women pursue a career in aviation, why they stay in the industry, and how the industry can build a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

“Combined, these two surveys tell a story of the number of women in multiple sectors and professions of aviation, what factors will assist in recruiting more women, and what factors influence the retention of women in the industry,” Becky said. “The two areas with less than 5% representation of women are maintenance technicians and airline executives. The next area with the greatest gap in employment is pilots. Only 5% of airline pilots are female. On a positive note, the total number of female pilots has increased in the last 10 years, but in that decade the increase has been just over 1% to a total of 7.3% of female pilots and we can do better,” she added.

Dr. Lutte presented the details of the latest membership survey results during the February Aviation Accreditation Board International’s Winter Meeting in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and during an education session at the WAI 2020 conference in Lake Buena Vista, Florida, on Friday, March 6.

Survey respondents were from a variety of occupations, and found factors that draw women into the aviation field are – passion for aviation, perceived as an adventurous profession,

perceived as a fun profession, desire to prove personal abilities, and desire for a challenging career. Three factors emerged that negatively influence women's desire to pursue or remain in aviation – cost of required training/education, perceived existence of good ole boy network, and perceived family life impact.

"Workforce development and constructing additional programs and initiatives to propel women of all ages and backgrounds to follow their own personal aviation dreams are chief among WAI priorities," says Allison McKay, WAI CEO. "We are excited to partner with Dr. Lutte and University of Nebraska Omaha Aviation Institute to assist us with this valuable research that will help us create these programs and results for our members and the aerospace community," adds Allison.

The data derived from this research will assist in the industry's efforts for outreach, recruitment, and retention of women in aviation.

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Women in Aviation International is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to providing networking, mentoring, and scholarship opportunities for women and men who are striving for challenging and fulfilling careers in the aviation and aerospace industries. For more information, contact WAI at 3647 State Route 503 South, West Alexandria, OH 45381, Tel: (937) 839-4647; or through www.wai.org.

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