

This Department and Program Review (DPR) report is an opportunity for you and your colleagues to reflect on the strengths, challenges, goals, and resource needs of your department/program – and to share those reflections with Academic Affairs leadership. Work closely with your instructional dean to develop a clear, concise, and evidence-supported narrative. The most compelling responses to each section below will feature both qualitative and quantitative data – and responses offered without supporting evidence may be returned for revision and further development. For quantitative data, consult Institutional Effectiveness's [Dashboard Index](#) and the [Discipline FAQ](#). Work with your dean if you have questions about support.

Section 1: Report on Previous Goals & Requests

Previous APR Goal	What Happened (support with data/evidence)
Establish a sustainable process for accommodating steadily increasing enrollment	Created Aviation Program Orientation for onboarding; collaborated across departments (CAP, Financial Aid, Admissions); enrollment grew from 294 (AY19–20) to 328 (AY24–25).
Improve gender diversity through marketing, recruiting, and hiring	Continued participation in Women in Aviation International events; collaborated with COCC's DEI Director; female enrollment rose from 27 (AY20–21) to 45 (AY24–25).
Evaluate opportunities for discipline expansion into aviation maintenance	No action due to limited staffing; initiative requires additional faculty and administrative resources.
Advocate for additional dedicated classroom space	Program Director continues to request dedicated classroom space; SLT has not granted any; lack of consistent classroom locations affects instructional continuity and student experience.
Strengthen industry partnerships and increase student employment pathways	Developed partnerships with Horizon, Papillon, and Sundance Helicopters; 90% of >50 employed flight instructors are COCC graduates; faculty offer resume support and job referrals.
Increase articulation agreements and transfer pathways	Finalized new articulation with Purdue University's Aviation program; maintained agreements with OIT and Embry-Riddle.
Enhance student retention and advising support	Sustained high-touch, mandatory in-person advising; advising helps students stay on track academically and financially; additional faculty needed to maintain service quality as enrollment grows.

Section 2: Fulfilling Your Mission

Mission Statement:

The Aviation Discipline at Central Oregon Community College (COCC) is dedicated to providing an environment that establishes a strong foundation in safety and professionalism, ultimately graduating pilots and aviation professionals whose knowledge and skills make them valuable contributors to the aviation industry.

Since our last Department & Program Review (DPR), we have upheld this mission by enhancing curriculum, strengthening industry partnerships, and expanding student support initiatives.

Curriculum & Program Enhancements

To ensure alignment with FAA regulations, we continue to refine our degree pathways, including Professional Pilot (Airplane and Helicopter) and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Operations. Students progress through structured coursework in aviation subjects including aerodynamics, meteorology, navigation and aviation law, combined with 5 FAA-required certifications including Commercial Pilot, and Certified Flight Instructor. Scenario-based instruction and critical-thinking exercises further prepare students for real-world aviation challenges.

Since the previous DPR, we have added one airplane flight simulator to our existing simulator fleet of 1 Helicopter and 1 Airplane simulator. The addition increased student access to this valuable instructional model as our enrollment has grown. It especially facilitates continued training during poor weather when actual flight training isn't possible, and provides an alternative when the other simulator is having maintenance performed or waiting on parts. This has greatly alleviated some scheduling issues, and all simulators run 7 days per week for at least a few hours per day.

Enrollment & Student Success Initiatives

Despite fluctuations in industry demand, enrollment remains steady, with increasing interest in airplane pilot training due to the national pilot shortage. Trends over the last five years shows a significant increase in the number of students enrolling in the Aviation Program (Figure 1). Additionally, the aviation program maintains a >70% completion rate, a testament to our intensive advising model, faculty mentorship, and early intervention strategies for students who are struggling.

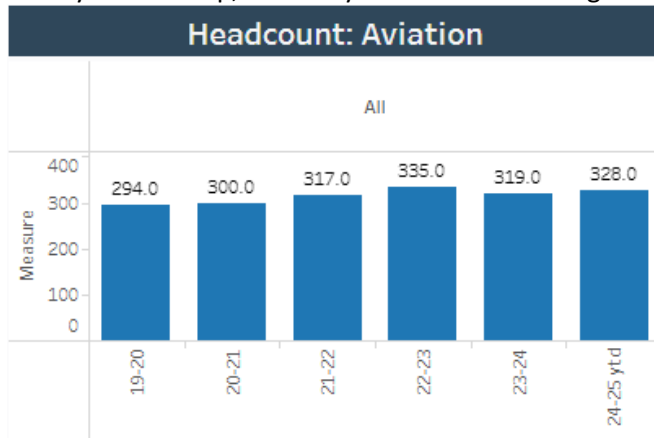


Figure 1:

Aviation enrollment since AY19-20 to present.

**Aviation (Airplane and Helicopter)
Enrollment data in gateway class and
completion 2 years later**

	Cohort 2020	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022
Enroll AV101	37	41	38
Degree	28	33	28
Completion %	75.7	80.5	73.7

We have also increased outreach to female pilots and military veterans, aligning with national efforts to diversify the aviation workforce. There has been a 40% increase in the number of female students over the 5-year period encompassing this DPR (See Section 4, below). However, there has been a 20% decrease in the number of veteran students.

Industry & Community Engagement

Our strong partnerships ensure seamless transitions for students pursuing further education and employment. We maintain articulation agreements with Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT), Purdue University, and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, allowing students to transfer into aeronautical science and operations management degrees. Additionally, our continued collaboration with Horizon Airlines Pilot Development Program provides select students with direct employment pathways upon graduation.

At the local level, we have strengthened ties with Sisters High School’s Flight Academy, supporting the development of aviation programs that introduce younger students to career opportunities in aviation. Faculty remain active in Friends of the Bend Airport, Central Oregon Aviation Safety Focus Group, and workforce development initiatives, ensuring COCC stays engaged in regional and national aviation discussions.

Infrastructure & Resources

We continue to leverage COCC’s Bend Municipal Airport facilities, improving access to state-of-the-art flight simulation technology that enhances training before live flight exercises. Due to enrollment growth, we have advocated for additional classroom and advising space, as current facilities are at capacity.

By integrating academic rigor with hands-on aviation training, strong industry connections, and comprehensive student support, the Aviation Discipline fulfills its mission of producing highly skilled aviation professionals while meeting workforce demands in Central Oregon and beyond.

Section 3: College Goals and Initiatives

The Aviation Discipline at Central Oregon Community College (COCC) actively contributes to the institution’s strategic goals by enhancing student success, expanding workforce development opportunities, fostering diversity and inclusion, and strengthening community and industry



partnerships. Since our last Department & Program Review (DPR), we have engaged in multiple initiatives that align with the college’s mission and strategic plan.

Enhancing Student Success & Retention

Student success is a core priority for the aviation program. We maintain a high-touch advising model, ensuring that students receive individualized guidance throughout their academic journey. Full-time faculty dedicate substantial time to academic advising, career mentoring, and early intervention efforts to improve retention and graduation rates. Our greater than 70% completion rate is a direct result of these efforts, making the aviation program one of COCC’s most successful career-technical programs.

Additionally, our FAA-aligned curriculum ensures students meet industry standards and are prepared for FAA knowledge and practical exams, supporting seamless entry into aviation careers. Hands-on learning experiences, including flight simulation and live flight training, continue to be an essential component of student engagement and success.

Workforce Development & Industry Engagement

COCC’s aviation program plays a key role in meeting workforce demands in Central Oregon and beyond. Our articulation agreements with Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT), Purdue University, and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University provide students with direct pathways to bachelor’s degrees in aeronautical science and operations management.

To further bridge the gap between education and employment, we continue to strengthen our relationship with Horizon Airlines Pilot Development Program, which offers mentorship and direct employment opportunities for our graduates. Additionally, students gain industry exposure through guest lectures, site visits, and networking events with aviation employers, enhancing their job readiness.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Initiatives

The aviation industry has historically lacked gender and racial diversity, and our program is committed to addressing these disparities. We actively participate in Women in Aviation initiatives and work to increase female and underrepresented student enrollment through targeted outreach and partnerships. Our program also continues to attract a strong military veteran student population, aligning with COCC’s commitment to supporting veterans in higher education.

Furthermore, faculty have engaged with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to explore strategies for making aviation education more accessible to students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Financial barriers remain a significant challenge for aspiring pilots, and we are working on expanding scholarship opportunities to increase access to flight training.

Community & Educational Partnerships

Our aviation program actively collaborates with local high schools, including Sisters High School’s Flight Academy, to create pipeline opportunities for younger students interested in aviation careers. We also participate in Oregon Aviation Industries Board and the Central Oregon Aviation Safety Focus Group, ensuring our curriculum remains aligned with industry trends and best practices.



By integrating student success initiatives, workforce development efforts, DEI strategies, and community engagement, COCC's aviation discipline continues to support the college's overarching mission while preparing students for successful careers in the aviation industry

Section 4: Diversity and Inclusion Insights

The Aviation program at COCC has made measurable progress in improving gender and racial diversity over the past five years, yet challenges remain in addressing veteran enrollment and ensuring equitable student outcomes. A review of Institutional Effectiveness data highlights both achievements and areas requiring further focus.

Strengths in Student Equity

The Aviation program has made notable strides in increasing female enrollment, which has grown by 40% from 2019-20 to 2024-25. This is a significant achievement in a historically male-dominated industry, where women comprise only 6.6% of pilots nationally (FAA, 2023). Efforts such as targeted outreach, mentorship programs, and partnerships with aviation organizations that support women have contributed to this progress.

Similarly, enrollment among Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and People of Color (BILAPOC) students has increased by 27% in the same timeframe. This growth suggests that recent diversity initiatives—such as expanding recruitment efforts to underrepresented communities and highlighting career pathways in aviation—have been effective. Maintaining and enhancing these efforts will be crucial to ensuring continued equity in access and success.

Challenges in Student Equity

Despite these gains, veteran enrollment has dropped by 25% from 2019-20 to 2024-25. This decline is particularly concerning given the program's historical reliance on veteran students using GI Bill benefits. Several factors may be contributing to this trend:

- Increased regulatory complexity: The Aviation program must adhere to strict VA compliance standards, and without a dedicated administrative presence at the airport, some veterans may struggle with navigating these requirements.
- Financial barriers: Flight training costs remain a significant concern, and while GI Bill benefits cover a portion of expenses, additional funding sources may be needed.
- Changes in veteran career interests: Nationally, more veterans are pursuing careers in technology and healthcare, impacting aviation enrollments.

Addressing this decline will require targeted outreach to veteran populations, strengthening partnerships with military transition programs, and ensuring seamless access to financial aid and advising.

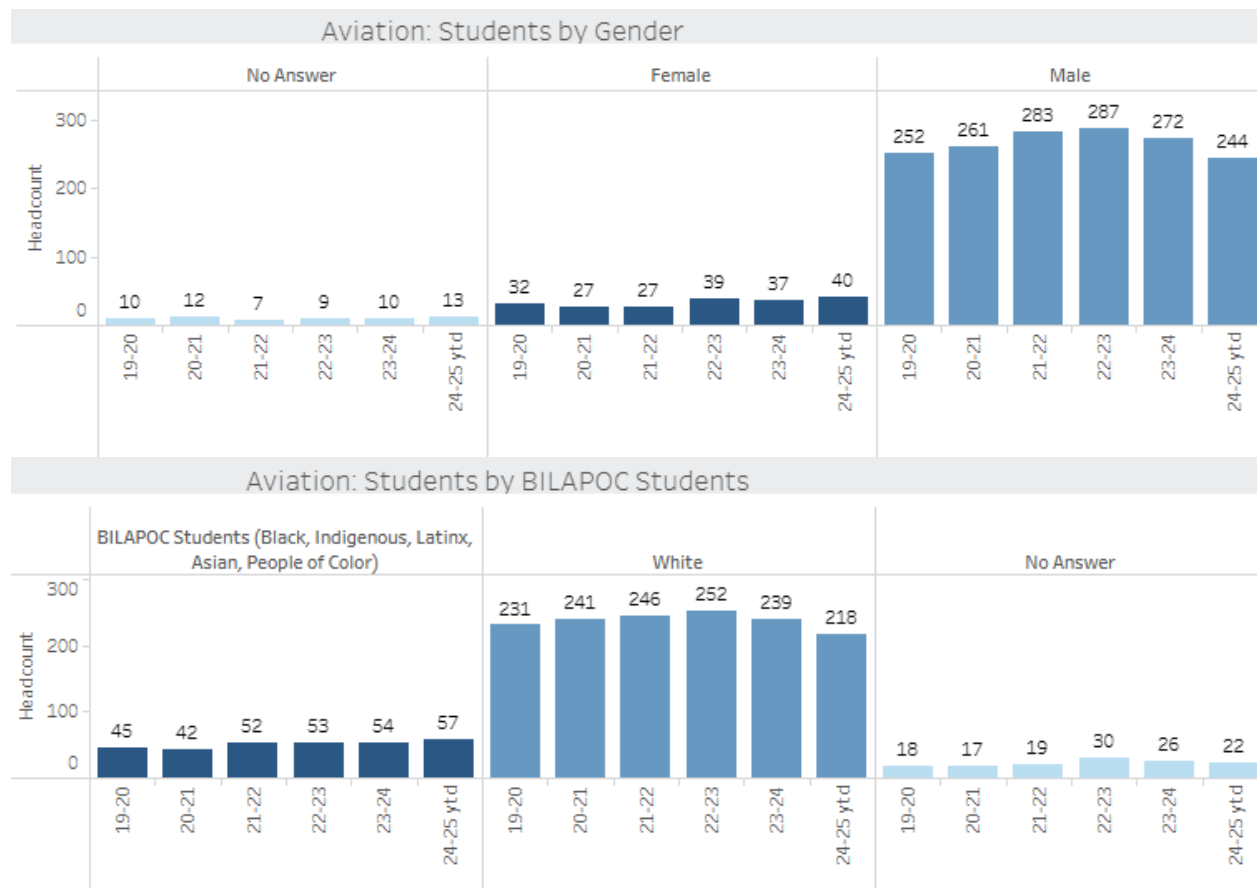
Understanding and Addressing Equity Gaps

To further support diverse student populations, Aviation faculty must engage in ongoing equity training and data-informed decision-making. Faculty can use Institutional Effectiveness dashboards to track student success rates by demographic factors, allowing for a deeper understanding of potential disparities in retention, completion, and course performance. Key strategies may include:

- Equity-focused professional development: Faculty can participate in workshops on inclusive teaching practices and cultural competency to better support diverse learners.
- Student support initiatives: Expanding mentorship programs, increasing access to financial resources, and providing targeted academic advising can help bridge equity gaps.
- Enhanced veteran services: Collaborating with COCC’s Veterans Services Office to streamline benefits processing and offering veteran-specific support groups could improve enrollment and retention.

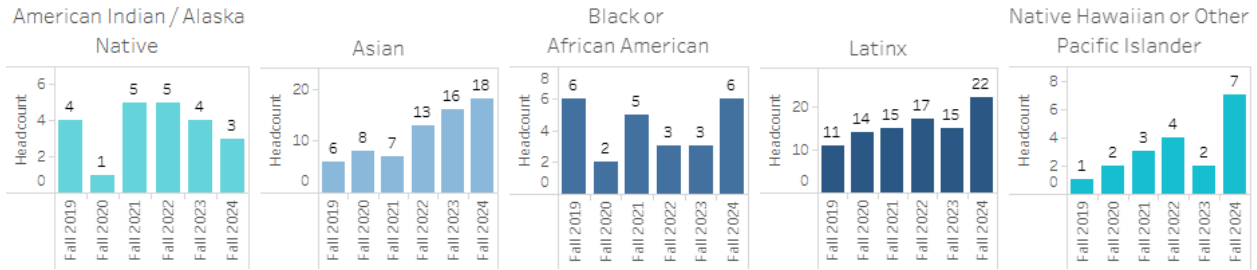
Conclusion

The Aviation program has demonstrated success in fostering greater gender and racial diversity, yet declining veteran enrollment presents an area of concern. By leveraging data to identify and address equity gaps, investing in faculty development, and expanding targeted student support initiatives, the program can continue to build a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students.

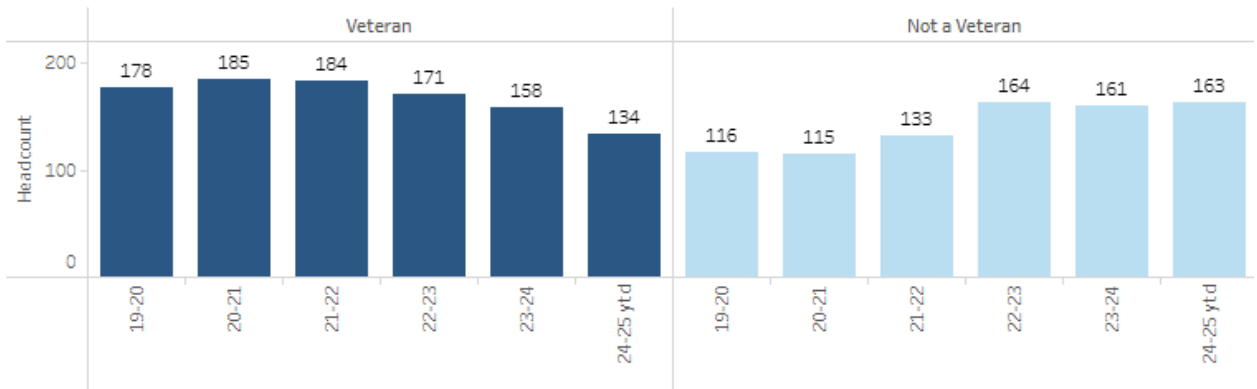


BILAPOC Students Broken out by Race/Ethnicity

Students are unduplicated within a category, but could be duplicated between categories. Example, if a student is Hispanic and Native American, they are counted once in both categories.



Aviation: Students by Veteran



Section 5: Strengths and Accomplishments

The Aviation Program at COCC has experienced remarkable growth and success, making it a nationally recognized leader in two-year aviation education. Over the past four years, enrollment in the fixed-wing aircraft program has increased by 150%, positioning COCC as the largest two-year aviation program in Oregon and one of the largest in the country. The program’s high completion rate of over 70% demonstrates strong student engagement, effective instructional methods, and comprehensive support services.

National Recognition and Veteran Support

COCC’s Aviation Program is one of the few college aviation programs still accepting veterans, attracting students from across the country. Our dedicated partnerships with Veteran Affairs and Financial Aid ensure that veteran students receive the resources they need to succeed. This commitment has solidified our reputation as a preferred aviation training destination for both veterans and civilian students alike.

Industry-Driven Training and Career Pathways

The program emphasizes both traditional aircraft training and state-of-the-art simulated flight training, ensuring students receive comprehensive, real-world preparation. This dual approach enhances pilot proficiency, reduces training costs, and improves student learning outcomes. In addition, the program boasts an industry-leading employment pipeline, with two-thirds of graduates hired as Certified Flight



Instructors (CFIs). This unique structure allows graduates to build flight hours efficiently as they progress toward commercial pilot certification.

Strategic Industry Partnerships

Strong industry partnerships have been a key factor in the program’s success. Our collaboration with Leading Edge Flight Academy provides students with high-quality training, while our partnership with Horizon Air offers direct financial support and a guaranteed job pathway for select students. These initiatives have increased accessibility to flight training and positioned COCC graduates for high-demand aviation careers.

Cross-Departmental Collaboration and Student Support

The program’s success is further strengthened by its collaborative approach with other departments. Faculty and administrators work closely with CAP Services, Veteran Affairs, Financial Aid, Admissions & Records, and eLearning to ensure students receive comprehensive academic and financial support. These efforts contribute to the high retention and completion rates, setting students up for long-term success.

Conclusion

COCC’s Aviation Program stands out for its unprecedented growth, national reputation, high completion rates, veteran-friendly policies, and strong industry partnerships. By leveraging cutting-edge technology, student-focused support services, and direct industry connections, the program continues to lead the state and the nation in two-year aviation education. The 150% enrollment growth, 70%+ completion rate, and robust graduate employment pipeline underscore the program’s effectiveness in preparing students for rewarding aviation careers.

Section 6: Challenges

The Aviation program at COCC faces several significant challenges that impact its ability to meet student needs and maintain compliance with Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Veterans Affairs (VA) regulations. These challenges primarily stem from staffing shortages, administrative oversight issues, and the need to improve recruitment efforts among underrepresented populations.

Faculty and Advising Overload

One of the most pressing issues is the insufficient number of full-time faculty. Currently, the Aviation program has only three full-time faculty members responsible for serving approximately 250 students per year, a sharp increase from the 50 students the program accommodated with only one fewer faculty member. Despite this significant enrollment growth, faculty numbers have not kept pace, creating an excessive workload for existing instructors.

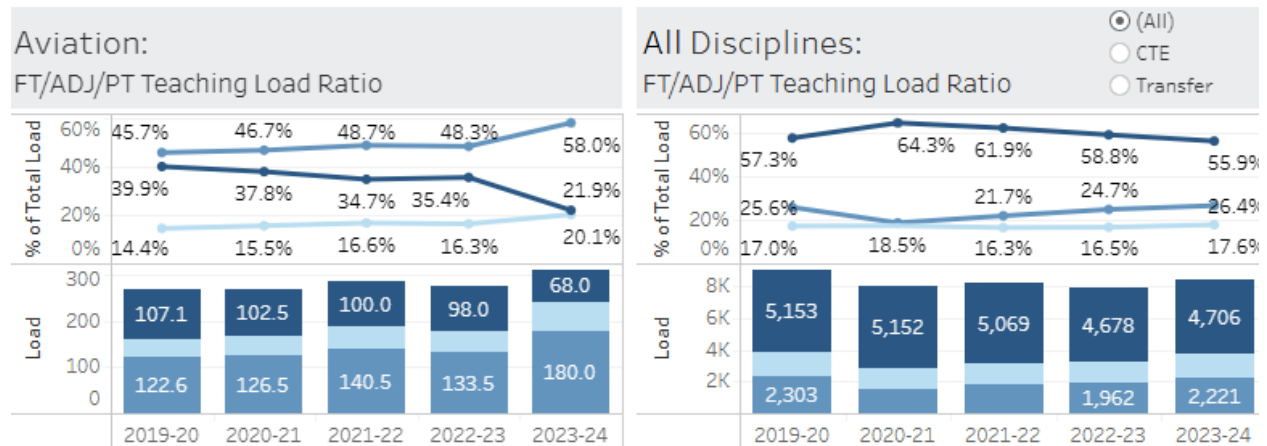
Each faculty member is responsible for over almost 100 student advisees per term, a figure well above reasonable advising loads, considering they must also manage full teaching schedules, flight operations at Leading Edge Aviation, and a myriad of other tasks not generally performed by other full time faculty

at the college, but necessary for the Aviation program functioning. Furthermore, while faculty are technically on nine-month contracts, they work year-round, spending 40+ hours per week during the summer on advising and administrative tasks in addition to teaching, yet only receive compensation for teaching summer classes.

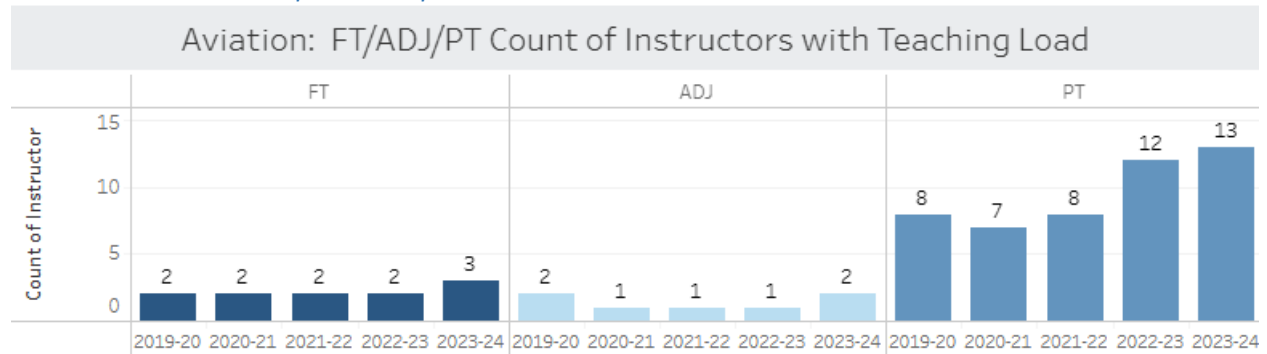
Quantitative data from the Faculty Position Request Data Dashboard highlights the disparity in instructional load distribution:

- In 2021-22 and 2022-23, full-time faculty carried 68% of total sections in the program. By 2023-24, this dropped to 32%, with part-time faculty taking on a significantly larger share (from 22% to 32%).
- The total instructional load for full-time faculty has decreased from 36.8% (2021-22) to 22% (2023-24), while part-time faculty load has increased from 46.3% to 58%.
- Comparatively, college-wide instructional load for full-time faculty is 56.6%, meaning the Aviation program is disproportionately reliant on part-time faculty compared to other disciplines (Overall College Numbers, 2023-24).

These numbers highlight the urgent need for additional full-time faculty to maintain instructional quality and meet regulatory standards.



Administrative and Compliance Gaps



Instructor	Advisees Total	Active Advisees
Lisa Shipman	235	165
John Cameron	144	89
Michelle Height	95	80

Another significant challenge is the lack of a permanent COCC administrative presence at the airport, which forces the program to rely on Leading Edge Aviation for student oversight. Given strict VA and FAA regulations, this is an unsustainable arrangement. The Program Director currently absorbs much of the compliance workload, which is not feasible long-term.

Regulatory requirements include:

- VA compliance monitoring to ensure students using VA benefits meet attendance and progression requirements.
- FAA oversight of flight training to align with federal aviation safety and certification standards.
- Coordination of 50+ Certified Flight Instructors (CFIs), who frequently transition in and out of the program, requiring continuous management.

Adding administrative support at the airport would streamline compliance processes, enhance student oversight, and improve operational efficiency.

Diversity and Inclusion Challenges

Finally, like the broader aviation industry, COCC's Aviation program faces difficulty in recruiting female and BIPOC students. Nationally, women make up only 6.6% of pilots (FAA, 2023), and minority representation remains low. Addressing this challenge requires targeted outreach and scholarship opportunities.

Conclusion

To address these challenges, the Aviation program must secure additional full-time faculty, establish administrative support at the airport, and develop diversity-focused recruitment initiatives. These steps will ensure long-term program sustainability, regulatory compliance, and continued student success.

Section 7: New Goals and Resource Needs

Goal	Timeline	Action Steps	Resources Needed
Department/Program Sustainability	4 FT Faculty in place by Fall 2026 and Policies & Procedures Manual complete by Fall 2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hire 4 full-time faculty to support advising, flight training, admin, and student interaction - Increase COCC presence at the airport - Develop consistent class schedule - Create Policies & Procedures Manual for faculty/staff training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 Full-time faculty positions - Administrative staffing at Bend Airport - Stipend for manual creation

Campus Presence	Ongoing (classroom space; department creation TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure 2–3 dedicated or semi-dedicated classrooms with shared study space - Use area for Aviation-specific communication and to build community within the program - Promote Aviation as a stand-alone department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permanent classroom space in one building - Facility renovation or reallocation - Administrative approval for department restructuring
DEI Initiatives	Ongoing; Junior Aviator Program by Summer 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continue participation in Women in Aviation International - Launch Junior Aviator Summer Program to reach underrepresented high school students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Event staffing and funding - Partnership with DEI and Outreach teams - Budget for materials, transportation, and program coordination
Flight Lab Training Materials Package	Private Pilot & CFI packages by 2025 Instrument & Commercial by 2026 CFII by 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form team from COCC and Leading Edge instructors - Develop lesson plans, training guides, ground assignments, and assessments for 5 certifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stipends for developing the flight labs - Collaborative hours with LEFA instructors - Materials development software or printing budget

The Aviation Program at Central Oregon Community College (COCC) continues to thrive as one of the most dynamic and fast-growing disciplines on campus. With enrollment increasing from 294 to 328 students over the past five years and a program completion rate consistently above 70%, the department has made significant progress in enhancing student success, retention, and career placement. Strong industry partnerships with organizations such as Horizon Air, Papillon Helicopters, and Leading Edge Flight Academy have created robust employment pipelines, with over 90% of COCC’s flight instructors being program alumni. The program has also made measurable gains in gender diversity and transfer opportunities, including a new articulation agreement with Purdue University. However, challenges remain in addressing staffing shortages, lack of dedicated classroom space, and declining veteran enrollment. To ensure sustainability and continued excellence, the program seeks increased faculty support, campus presence, and investment in DEI and instructional resources. Overall, the Aviation Program remains committed to its mission of graduating highly skilled, safety-conscious aviation professionals prepared to meet workforce demands across the region and beyond.