



## Department and Program Review Response Letter Aviation

June 6, 2025

Dear Lisa, Kamilla, and John:

Thank you for taking part in Department & Program Review (DPR) this year. The DPR process reveals critical connections that link your strengths, needs, values, priorities, and plans to those of the College. Further, it supports our commitment to innovation through continual improvement. We commend your dedication to empowering our students, engaging our communities, and supporting our values. This response to your report is based on what we see as your successes, what you and we identified as challenges, and guidance on how to proceed with the goals and needs you have described.

### Successes and Kudos

The Aviation Program remains one of the most productive and high-profile disciplines at COCC, with a 70%+ degree completion rate and robust employment pathways. Through strategic partnerships with Leading Edge Flight Academy and Horizon Air, the program offers students strong job prospects, including Certified Flight Instructor (CFI) roles and direct pipelines to commercial aviation employment.

The program has also seen significant growth in female enrollment (from 27 to 45 in five years) and has expanded its articulation agreements to include Purdue University, adding to existing partnerships with OIT and Embry-Riddle.

Furthermore, its commitment to inclusive outreach, such as Women in Aviation events and the development of a Junior Aviator summer program, reflects important DEI efforts.

- Professional conference with meetings/gatherings, seminars
- Places to showcase schools/programs, several employment partners there
- Junior aviation program – could work with Continuing Education

However, the program's visible successes obscure significant structural issues that must be urgently addressed to preserve quality and compliance.

### Challenges

#### Over-Enrolled, Under-Resourced

The program has experienced a 150% increase in fixed-wing student enrollment, making it the largest two-year aviation program in Oregon. While this is a testament to its success, unchecked growth has exceeded the program's ability to maintain quality instruction, adequate advising, and FAA/VA compliance. This is not sustainable. Work with your dean to determine where to cap enrollment to align with available instructional, administrative, and advising resources. Growth must be redefined as improving program quality, not adding headcount. The new control tower (Feb 26) at airport may limit operations at airport; when this comes on board, it will be a good time to evaluate size of program. If we are trying to grow the helicopter program, Leading Edge (LE) has a new facility for helicopter training that we could explore partnering on.

## Insufficient Faculty and Advising Capacity

Currently, three full-time faculty serve nearly 250 students while also managing complex advising, compliance, and curriculum duties. Advisees are not evenly divided among faculty and advising continues over the summer. COCC's own data shows a disproportionate reliance on part-time faculty—an inverse of the college-wide average—which risks program continuity and compliance. We recommend prioritizing stabilization of our current faculty and work toward right-sizing faculty and enrollment to restore balance, relieve overburdened faculty, and ensure safe and effective instruction. Please work to train new faculty in advising strategies quickly so that students are shared more evenly across faculty. Capping enrollment will also help the advising load 2-3 years into the future. When new faculty arrive, they should assist with the planning for sharing the advising load. You have indicated no ideas for the future that we support: you plan to set up a calendar system so students will go to who is available, not just the program director; and the faculty advisors will also be using GradTracks to share advising notes. Digitizing your processes in shared systems will make for the greatest collaboration.

## Lack of COCC Administrative Presence at the Airport

Faculty are absorbing duties that should be handled by administrative staff—including VA compliance, flight instructor onboarding, scheduling, and records maintenance. These responsibilities are regulatory in nature and carry risk if unmet. Consider establishing a permanent 0.5–1.0 FTE administrative coordinator at Bend Municipal Airport to ensure FAA/VA compliance, freeing faculty for instructional roles, and improving overall operational efficiency. This coordinator could manage flight labs, freeing more instructional/faculty duty time for full-time faculty.

## Lack of Designated Campus Classroom or Community Space

Unlike some CTE programs, Aviation students lack a consistent classroom or study space on the Bend campus. This limits community-building, course cohesion, and visibility within the broader college. As the College develops a space allocation process, clarify Aviation's specific needs so that they can be appropriately prioritized. Work with your dean to identify potential classrooms and or lab and study space, to provide a "home base" for Aviation students and faculty.

## Goals and needs

You have identified several goals and needs for the next five years.

### Department/Program Sustainability

**Reframe Growth Strategy:** Future growth should prioritize quality over quantity. Capping enrollment to align with staffing and facilities is recommended. Work with your dean to determine a data-informed approach to this work.

**Evaluate Full-Time Faculty need:** The program needs to maintain instructional quality and advising effectiveness. Stabilizing our current faculty and sharing advising loads will provide a better understanding of the need for additional faculty.

**Add Administrative Presence at Airport:** An on-site staff member at Bend Municipal Airport may be useful. This would support FAA/VA compliance and reduce the burden on instructional faculty. During budget development at the College, work with your dean to plan for and request such help.

### Campus Presence

**Seek Permanent Campus Space:** As the College develops a space allocation process, clarify Aviation's specific needs so that they can be appropriately prioritized. Work with your dean to identify potential classrooms and or lab and study space, to provide a "home base" for Aviation students and faculty.

### DEI Initiatives

**Invest in DEI and Outreach:** Institutional support is needed to launch the Junior Aviator summer program by 2029. Continued work with the DEI office so that outreach to underrepresented groups will promote long-term inclusion.

## Flight Lab Training Materials Package

**Standardize Curriculum and Onboarding:** Developing a comprehensive Policies & Procedures Manual and finalizing flight lab curriculum will improve instructional consistency. This is critical as faculty and flight instructors onboard in a high-turnover field.

## Conclusion

Thank you for your ongoing dedication to student readiness. Together, we can build on our achievements, address the challenges ahead, and meet the evolving needs of our students. We look forward to working collaboratively to review, analyze, and enhance the quality and impact of the Aviation program. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please reach out.

Sincerely yours,



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Affairs



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