

Department of Aviation and Technical Education Impacts CTE Programs

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In case you missed it, on July 1, 2020 a new department was launched at Utah State University; the Department of Aviation and Technical Education. AVTE is focused upon providing students with opportunities that lead to careers that rely upon "doing". The enrollment in our programs in the fall of 2020 was about 900 students, spread across southeastern Utah, with opportunities to participate in technical certificate programs, technology programs that offer employment-ready skills with certifications that can become the foundation for associate's and bachelor's degrees, and aviation programs.

The creation of the department was spurred on by an initiative through the state legislature (S.B 232 <https://le.utah.gov/~2019/bills/sbillenr/SB0232.pdf>) that elevated the roles and responsibilities for technical education training opportunities in the southeast region for Utah State University. The department offers technical certificate programs at the USU Eastern's, Price, Moab, and Blanding campuses, a geographical region that encompasses approximately 40,000 square miles. Many of these programs had been administered through USU's School of Applied Sciences, Technology and Education and were familiar to me as the former department head of that unit. Notably, health professions faculty and programs were brought under the AVTE umbrella and we continue serving the important healthcare needs of southeast Utah. Throughout much of 2020, the wheels of transformation were starting to turn, and we rolled out 29 certificate programs in fall of 2020, with a tuition structure that is on par with other technical colleges in Utah.

Our commitment to student success builds from technical training certificates, to degree programs with stackable pathways, to an associate of applied science degree in general technology. We have a stackable bachelor of science degree program – technology systems -- that allows students to continue in their technical education career pathway.

The department's programs are rounded out with our aviation technology program. Aviation technology is comprised of three distinct programmatic areas – aviation management; maintenance management; and professional pilot. We offer comprehensive FAA certifications to serve students and provide opportunities into aviation careers.

The past two semesters have been demanding for many reasons. Of course there are speed bumps along the way, but our successes are many – for instance the department rolled out three CARES act funding programs at USU in the fall term. I want to assure you that we are working to smooth the pathways for students and will continue to provide technical training opportunities. The department is fortunate to have a wide spectrum of instructional talent and abilities. Faculty and staff approached new challenges with dedication and a sense of community in our department. We have learned new ways to reach and teach our students – and at the same time, we are reminded of the importance of hands-on, face-to-face teaching strategies. I look forward to the time of getting to enjoy each other's company and exchange ideas.

Go Aggies!
Bruce Miller
AVTE department head