

BUSINESS AVIATION

 **NBAA**

INSIDER

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF NBAA

2023-2024

STUDENT EDITION



READY FOR TAKEOFF

PG 10 There Are Many Ways to Kick-Start Your Aviation Career

5TH ANNUAL STUDENT EDITION

FINDING YOUR PATH IN AVIATION
One Student Shares His Journey
PG 12

FROM INTERN TO BIZJET PILOT
It Takes Dedication and Focus
PG 14

AIRFRAME TECH TO AIRFRAME TEAM LEADER IN 3½ YEARS



"I just love the people I work with, and I think that's pretty important; it makes you want to come to work every day."

"It's so rewarding to completely tear down an airplane, put it back together, and have a happy customer and happy team at the end. You really feel like you've accomplished things."

Julia Cwiek, Airframe Team Lead

LEARN MORE: www.DA.aero/pathways/julia

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**DUNCAN
AVIATION**





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The cover photo shows a student in a flight simulator at the 2022 National Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE).

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To learn more about business aviation careers, visit NBAA's student resources at nbaa.org/students. Students enrolled in high school, college or vocational programs are encouraged to join as an NBAA Professional member for the student rate of \$40. Join NBAA today at nbaa.org/join.



WELCOME MESSAGE

Aviation Is a Team Sport



JO DAMATO, CAM
*NBAA Sr. Vice President, Education,
Training & Workforce Development*

As a student you've probably had multiple experiences working on a team in a class, sport or club. I'll bet you've found yourself in multiple roles on the team, too – leader, contributor, organizer, cheerleader ... maybe sometimes you've been all the above at the same time! In those moments you might think, I can get this done faster if I do it myself. While that might be true, in the long run you may be harming your ability to thrive in a team environment and, make no mistake about it, aviation is a team sport!

It doesn't matter if you want to fly the aircraft, maintain it or support the operation in another way. It takes a team to create the lift needed to complete the mission. A pilot might tell you that the aircraft can't fly without them at the controls, and an aircraft technician might argue that you can't fly a broken aircraft. They're both right. A line service professional might say you need them to fuel and service the plane. And a scheduler or dispatcher will say you need them to help plan a safe flight. They're right too!

If you can think of a career that exists outside of aviation, then I guarantee you that that profession is also critical to success in aviation.

And I haven't even mentioned equipment manufacturers, flight attendants, caterers, finance and legal professionals ... if you can think of a career that exists outside of aviation, then I guarantee you that that profession is also critical to success in aviation.

What's the secret to all these individuals working together? It's the same as what makes a championship team. Communication and working towards a common goal!

Aviation is a small and friendly community and there is no shortage of passion and enthusiasm among this group. Successful aviation teams focus on team dynamics and communication strategies that encourage diversity of thought and understand the benefits that foundation can have on an aviation business in terms of safety, fiscal health, morale and more. The best leaders often come from the best teams!

In this Business Aviation Insider Student Edition, you'll read about young people creating their own successful and unique careers. I encourage you to note all the different roles they play and the advice they share. We want you on our team, too, and hope to see you as a major contributor in business aviation soon! ✨

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NBAA FLIGHT PLAN

Listen to weekly podcasts about business aviation

Whether you need operational and air traffic guidance to assist your flight planning, or have an interest in emerging industry trends and technologies in business aviation, NBAA Flight Plan helps you prepare for what's next. Subscribe to NBAA Flight Plan on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts or Spotify, or listen to past reports going to the link below.

nbaa.org/flightplan



CONSIDERING A CAREER IN AVIATION? Get the Edge at NBAA's Career Center

If you're considering a career in aviation, NBAA has everything you need to make your resume stand out, ace the interview, advance your career, and navigate the digital world through social media and digital communication.

Visit NBAA's Career Center for help with the following and more:

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- Resume review by experts
- Interview preparation
- Networking in person and on social media

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Sign up for an NBAA student password at nbaa.org/password/student.

FLIGHT BAG



SCHOLARSHIPS

The NBAA Charities scholarship program offers nearly \$100,000 annually in cash awards as tuition reimbursement for enrolled students.

At least six such scholarships are offered annually – see which one works best for you.

nbaa.org/scholarships



CAREER CENTER

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PHOTO © WILLIAMSON IMAGES



Why Choose Business Aviation?

Business aviation needs talented young people like you. Here are just a few of the reasons you should consider a career in this industry:

- Wide variety of roles within a flight department – including directors of aviation, pilots, maintenance managers, safety managers, schedulers, dispatchers, flight attendants and flight technicians – as well as many other positions from marketing and sales to fixed-base operator management.
- Outstanding diversity in aircraft, missions,

schedules and clients.

- Great prospects for jobs and career advancement with excellent mentoring, internship and networking opportunities available nationwide.

NBAA is a resource for students like you who are interested in aviation careers. Students enrolled in high school, college or vocational programs are encouraged to join as an NBAA Professional member for the special student rate of \$40. Join NBAA today!

nbaa.org/join

6 Tips for Starting Your Aviation Journey

If you're a high school or college student who loves aviation and flying, but you don't know how to begin creating your aviation career path, here are some tips to help you get started:

1. **Evaluate yourself.** List your strengths so you can figure out what drives you and what you're passionate about.
2. **Stay informed.** Research and stay updated on aviation news – you never know when something will catch your eye.
3. **Attend aviation events.** Visit local airport fly-ins, museum exhibitions, job fairs and other public events, and consider attending aviation summer camps.
4. **Network.** Reach out to people in the industry to talk with them and build connections. You can network even as a high-schooler or college undergraduate.

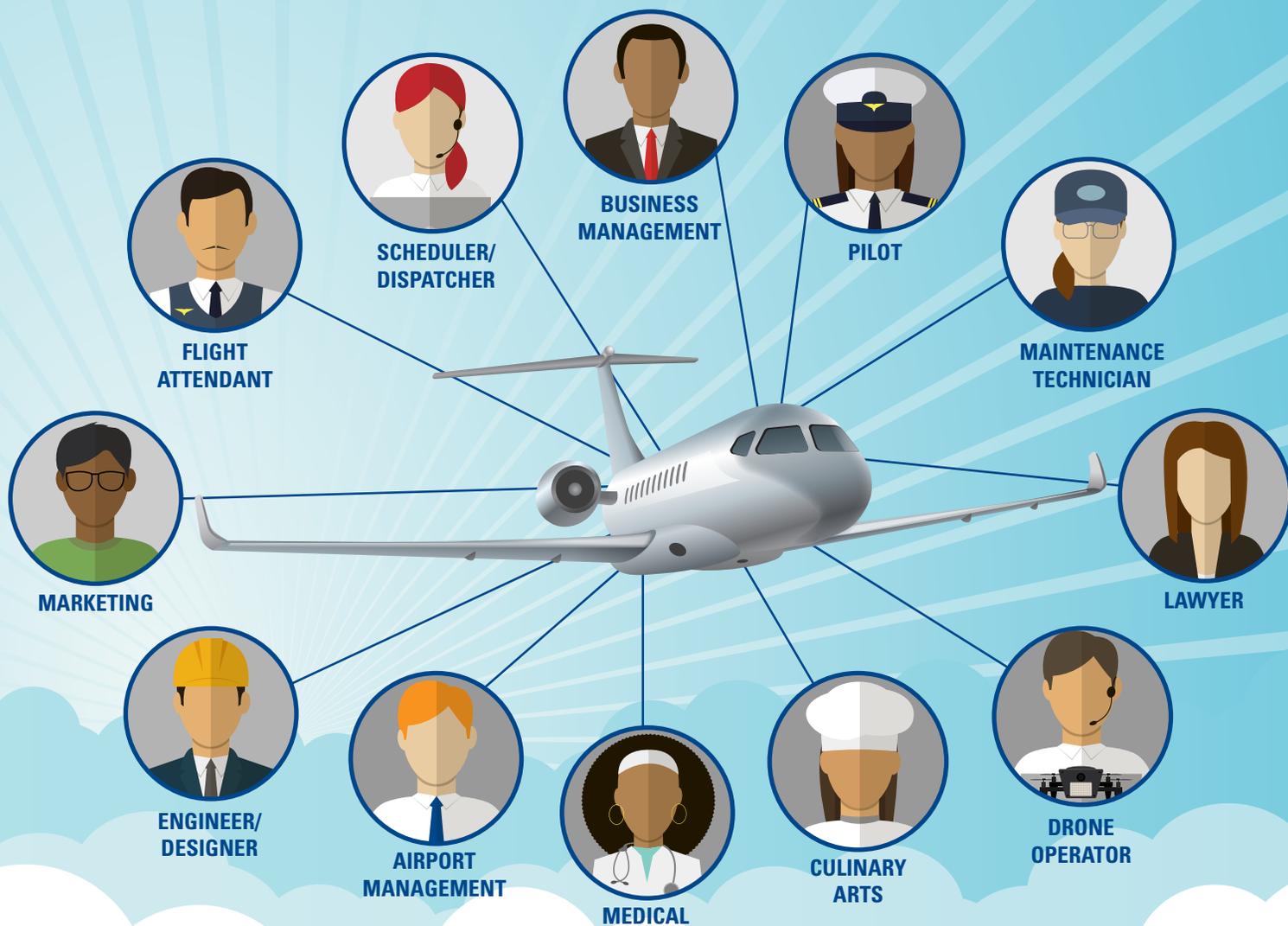
5. **Tour, tour, tour.** If you're considering colleges and tech schools, try to visit every school you're interested in and talk to the students there – not just the guides, but anyone you pass by! Get multiple perspectives and attend campus events.

6. **Don't limit yourself!** You can continue to change your mind and redirect your path at any time, even if you don't know what you want yet. Don't stick with a major or career path you hate! Stay positive, continue to educate yourself and explore options.



For Aviation Jobs, the Sky Is Just the Beginning!

As a student, you have plenty of options for your career path – including the outstanding diversity of roles, aircraft and missions found within the business aviation industry. Here are just a few of the exciting job opportunities in business aviation:



Fast Facts About Aircraft Maintenance Technicians

\$82,370 the median annual wage for aircraft maintenance and service technicians in 2022.

13,100 openings for aircraft and avionics technicians are forecast each year through 2032.

SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS



37,000

new business aircraft pilots will be needed to offset attrition and retirements over the next 10 years.

SOURCE: CAE AVIATION TALENT FORECAST (2023)

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Why I Love Business Aviation

Six young professionals explain why they enjoy working in the industry.



ADVA AMIR
Co-Founder and CEO
Direct

“Where else can you work with such a colorful mix of people, companies and perspectives, all in one industry?”



ANDY CASTRO
Regional Vice President, FBO
Operations, Sheltair

“What excites me most about business aviation is that no day is the same and you're always learning and evolving. It's also rewarding to be able to help others grow as leaders in the aviation industry.”



STEPHANIE GOETZ
Pilot
NetJets

“Business aviation opens up more parts of the world to aviators and passengers. One of the beauties of this part of the industry is that we get to fly into all kinds of destinations.”



ETHAN PRUITT
Manager/Aircraft Maintenance, QuikTrip Corporation
Flight Operations

“I enjoy overcoming daily operational challenges, using critical thinking to diagnose discrepancies and the challenges that come with the growth of our department.”



AMBER BRIERY
Owner
Create With Kiwi

“Being in the heart of a bustling aviation hub exposed me to the fast-paced and exciting world of business jets and the dedicated professionals behind each flight.”



LETWAN SUTTON
Aviation Tax Manager
MySky

“The business aviation industry seems so big at first, but it doesn't take long to get to know people.”

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YOPRO QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Join Our Mailing List

NBAA's Young Professionals in Business Aviation (YoPro) is a group dedicated to building relationships between emerging leaders across the business aviation industry. With expertise in areas such as marketing, professional development and community outreach, YoPro members work to connect young professionals while also increasing public awareness of new initiatives in this vibrant and growing industry.

nbaa.org/yopro/mail



SMALL SCHOOLS

Open Doors for Business Aviation Students

A young aviation professional proves that community colleges and technical schools provide a valuable education for students who don't want the financial burden of a four-year degree or who simply want to kick-start their careers.

“

Be open to everything and ask questions. Aviation people love to talk about the industry and how they got where they are.”

SHAUNDRA GIBBS

Flight Operations Coordinator,
Aero Air Charter



Shaundra Gibbs was attending college in her hometown of Pensacola, FL, when, like most college kids, she needed a part-time job and joined a friend working at Delta Global Services. Gibbs was an undeclared major at the time, unsure of her future plans, when this part-time gig sparked her initial interest in aviation. When another friend went to Southwest Airlines as a dispatcher, her interest in aviation was really piqued.

Gibbs didn't have a firm career plan in mind but her few years in aviation spurred a move to Polk State College in Polk County, FL, to attend an intensive FAA flight dispatcher license program.

Gibbs graduated from the program, which she called "hard but very rewarding" just as the COVID-19 pandemic shut down much of the transportation industry and jobs were scarce. Gibbs didn't let that unfortunate turn of events deter her. She returned to her hometown and took jobs outside the industry, buying time until aviation picked up again.

Eventually Gibbs returned to Polk State College to apply credits from the dispatcher certificate program and her associate degree to an online bachelor's program. While attending the program, she had an opportunity to work at a local FBO – or fixed-based operator – which provides basic aviation services such as aircraft maintenance and buying fuel.

"It was nice to compare what I was learning in class with the real-life experience at an FBO," said Gibbs, especially since that FBO position eventually led to her current job as a flight operations coordinator at Aero Air Charter in Pensacola.

Aero Air Charter learned that Gibbs had a dispatch license and that she, by then, had over five years of experience in a range of aviation roles. The company created a position to bring Gibbs on board.

Gibbs finds business aviation satisfying for a number of reasons, with the most significant being the spontaneity and ever-changing nature of her job.

"I hate doing the same thing over and over and that's why I love business aviation – every day is different. You never know what's going to happen," Gibbs said.

One unexpected advantage of bizav is creating community connections, which she appreciates for both community growth and networking for the future.

Gibbs said the industry also offers a different type of culture than larger organizations like the airlines, and one of the best parts of working in business aviation is the small-team feel.

"Being in business aviation allows me to contribute to a bigger cause, to have a bigger impact than an airline position," said Gibbs.

Gibbs' path demonstrates a few keys to a successful new career and she has tips for current students and recent grads.

First, be flexible. The aviation industry, like many others, is subject to variables outside our control, from terrorist attacks in 2001 to a major recession in 2008 and COVID-19 in 2020. Graduating around those significant events meant dealing with harsh hiring realities for some period of time. Gibbs shows that new aviation professionals can work to pay the bills but return to aviation when the time is right.

Second, know that aviation careers often build from one position to another without an obvious or guaranteed path. Gibbs realizes her career has been built one position at a time.

"My whole life after high school led me to this position at Aero Air Charter," said Gibbs.

Gibbs encourages other young people to look for opportunities and be ready to take advantage of them. You never know when opportunities might arise, so be open to where they might lead next.

"You can start young not knowing exactly what you want to do. It's all experience that will help in the future," Gibbs said. "Be open to everything and ask questions. Aviation people love to talk about the industry and how they got where they are."

Gibbs suggests visiting local airports and flight schools and looking for any job to get your foot in the door, such as a part-time customer service representative who checks passengers in for their flight or working on the ramp parking aircraft.

These experiences all add to your overall knowledge in the industry and make you a better-rounded candidate for future positions, Gibbs explained.

BRINGING MORE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO AVIATION

Countless young people have the skills to thrive in the industry but simply don't know about the exciting career opportunities it offers.

"It's a tight-knit community, which is part of why it's great, but we need to reach out and share what types of opportunities are in aviation and in business aviation in particular," Gibbs said. "I didn't have any idea what business aviation was, but then realized there are many different avenues outside of commercial aviation. It's not all about the airlines."

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

Her experience demonstrates the value of smaller schools that offer aviation-related education programs. Polk State College, for example, began as a community college but now offers programs ranging from a non-degree certification program as an aircraft dispatcher, associate degrees and a bachelor's degree in aerospace sciences.

Community colleges and technical schools provide a valuable education for students who don't want the financial burden of a four-year degree or who simply want to get started in their career sooner. They also offer bridges from one planned path to another. Gibbs' path highlights the flexibility of these programs – first obtaining an associate degree, then a dispatcher license and then the potential to apply that education towards bachelor's degree credits.

The value of such schools will become clearer as more employers drop requirements for four-year degrees to cast a wider recruiting net.

Polk State College and others like it will continue to prove their value through their graduates – including Shaundra Gibbs. ✦

Review NBAA's student resources at nbaa.org/students.



HOW I FOUND MY PATH TO BUSINESS AVIATION

A business aviation intern shares personal insights about navigating through the industry's countless career options and discovering where to pursue his dreams.

By Tim Gelfer, NBAA Intern

When aviation professionals talk about “the aviation bug,” they often refer to the first time they realized they wanted to pursue a career in the industry. For many, this moment comes from them living next to an airport, having a family member in aviation or watching exhilarating action movies like “Top Gun.” For me, this moment came during my first flight that I vividly remember when I was in sixth grade.

Flying internationally, I took a Boeing 787 across the Atlantic. The Dreamliner intrigued me, and I started researching this and other types of airplanes. That led to visits to the local airport to planespot aircraft, which then led to further examinations into various aviation careers. Despite not always knowing exactly what to pursue, I knew a career in aviation would be fulfilling while helping serve millions of people who use aviation every day.

My entry to business aviation would come a bit later, after following a winding road that offered valuable lessons along the way.

TRY MANY OPPORTUNITIES

As we all know, aviation is a vast career field with applications in commercial, business, military and general aviation. The career opportunities are endless: from flying as a pilot, working in airport operations or designing the next new aircraft as an engineer. Knowing exactly what you want to do can be a difficult decision, especially when you may not even know everything that’s available. In my experience, the best way to find your niche in the industry involves trying different things to expose yourself to as many different opportunities as possible.

During middle and high school, I explored clubs and activities to help me find a general direction that I wanted to pursue in aviation. I joined the Civil Air Patrol with the goal of learning more about how airplanes work. It allowed me to experience flying an airplane and operating the controls. I learned about search-and-rescue operations and gained exposure to military aviation. I took high school engineering classes and joined the robotics team to learn about pursuing a career as an aerospace



“

I realized that what I enjoyed most about aviation was how it helps make the world a smaller and more connected place, transporting people and goods to where they need to go in hours instead of days.”

engineer. Through these experiences, I realized that what I enjoyed most about aviation was how it helps make the world a smaller and more connected place, transporting people and goods to where they need to go in hours instead of days.

This prompted me to pursue a degree in aviation business administration from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, AZ, where I've gained additional insight about what part of the industry I want to work in. Joining the school's chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE), I toured international airports and listened to prominent aviation guest speakers.

The 2022 NBAA Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE) in Orlando, FL, really opened my eyes to business aviation. Seeing the vast number of exhibitors – from new electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, to major aircraft manufacturers and small FBOs – ultimately led me to intern for NBAA this past summer. After graduation, I'm looking to pursue a career in airport or flight operations, helping ensure the smooth and safe flow of traffic and services throughout the air-space system.

EXTEND YOUR REACH BEYOND SCHOOLWORK

To find the path that's right for you, it's important to try

things you enjoy beyond schoolwork where you can contribute the most. Had I not done this I don't believe I would have seen a clear picture of everything this amazing industry has to offer.

LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN

There's no limit to what you can learn in business aviation. It's constantly innovating to be more efficient and valuable to the people it serves. The industry often leads the way in developing new technologies.

Luckily, aviation is filled with passionate people who love what they do, and who love to educate people about their passions. Take every opportunity to attend conferences, events, tours and classes related to what you're interested in.

SEEK OUT MENTORS

Find mentors who are doing what you want to do and ask them questions about their jobs and the industry itself. You can generally find people willing to help you at your school, organizations or clubs, work, or through family and friends. Effective mentors have already found their career paths, so they can help you avoid common mistakes or find solutions to your challenges. They can also connect you to managers who could be hiring for a job you may be interested in.

Overall, and most importantly, have fun searching for the career path that's right for you and you'll be sure to enjoy the unbounded opportunities aviation has to offer. ✨



Tim Gelfer is an Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University student who is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in aviation business administration. He served as an intern at NBAA during the summer of 2023.



Focused Journey



How young business aviator Josh Hernandez went from intern to piloting a G550 in just a few years.

Sitting in the right seat of a Gulfstream 550, Josh Hernandez said he would not change any of the stepping stones that led to the fulfillment of his penultimate career goal – piloting a large cabin business aircraft with international destinations based in his hometown of Chicago.

Contemplating the advice he'd offer to his younger self, "Enjoy the journey, but expect it to suck at times," he said. "People don't talk about the ugly times, and I wish someone had told me that." It would have made his greatest aviation challenge – being patient while building time – easier to cope with.

"As a young, eager aviator, you just want to get it done. You want it so bad you'll fly for food. Sometimes the opportunities are there and sometimes they are not. Remain patient while being diligent. Work hard, be steadfast, remain humble and look at a bigger picture," he said. "How can you best invest your time to become a well-rounded aviation professional?"

Don't focus on a single goal, consider any opportunity involved with aviation. "I could have made more money at Walgreens, but working line service allowed me to meet hundreds of pilots who answered my questions and gave me tours of their airplanes." Be a proactive participant and sustain the connections you make during the journey.

A former NBAA intern, Hernandez often remembers advice he received at an NBAA International Operators Conference. On your initial meeting, note the talking points on the person's business card after the conversation, then follow up with an email saying it was a pleasure meeting them and you were glad to hear about some of the talking points.

PLANTING THE SEED

Vauna Hernandez consistently exposed her son to new things. "The Chicago Air & Water Show is one of our traditions, and the U.S. Navy Blue Angels have always been my favorites," she said. "Those blue and gold jets planted the seed." But it was the Chicago chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, working with the EAA Young Eagles program, that

“

Josh has a robust dedication to business aviation, and from the first day I met him, he knew it was what he wanted to do.”

GRANT BARTOW
Hernandez's Mentor

first got Hernandez airborne in February 2003, said Steve Whitney, an NBAA member who then flew a Mooney M20.

Hernandez's mother signed up her 11-year-old for a rally at the now-closed Meigs Field, Whitney remembered. The gray weather left pilots with open seats, and learning that they lived six blocks from his home, Whitney "told Josh to grab his mom and, following the lakeshore south to the Museum of Science and Industry, we'd fly over our neighborhood," Whitney said.

Soaring over Rogers Park, "Steve talked me through a right-bank turn so we could look down at our apartment," Hernandez recalled. "At that moment I knew that this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life." Whitney later offered to be a mentor.

Walking around Palwaukee, now Chicago Executive Airport (PWK), the crew of a three-engine business jet introduced Hernandez to business aviation.

"Teaching me to advocate for myself, Steve said 'Let's go talk to them.' They were so kind. They put me in the left seat, answered all my questions, and told me to push different buttons. I think I shut down the APU. That experience made me realize how cool these airplanes are, and that flying them is what I wanted to do."

Focused Journey

SCHOLARSHIP

As a freshman in the aviation degree program at Illinois' Quincy University, Hernandez earned his private pilot certificate in 2010. He started instrument training the following year.

"It was really expensive, and I had to step away from aviation from 2012 to 2017," he said, but Hernandez made great use of his time while he continued working toward his degree at a community college, ultimately returning to the university and earning his bachelor's in aviation management in 2017.

With Whitney, Hernandez took part in Chicago Area Business Aviation Association (CABAA) events, and in 2011 he earned a CABAA scholarship that helped him with his flight training. (Later, he earned a Citation XLS type rating.) Whitney also urged him to apply for an NBAA internship. "Apply," he said, "you never know." I got the internship in DC. Literally, it was the best summer job I've ever had." 2016 went so well, Hernandez did it again in 2017.

Hernandez also earned two NBAA International Operator Scholarships, which helped fund his flight training and got him to NBAA International Operators Conferences (IOC).

'I WANTED TO EARN'

Upon graduation, Hernandez joined Quincy Aviation as a line service technician/fueler, utilizing the employee discount on aircraft rentals to resume his flight training. "All my buddies were flight instructors and former classmates, and they didn't charge me," he said. "I got my instrument rating, followed shortly by my commercial and my multiengine rating in 2018."

He passed on a flight instructor ticket. "When I got my commercial, I wanted to earn. You're at a crossroads. With a commercial certificate and a multiengine rating, you're ready – I want a job right now!"

The seed that grew into his first job was planted by mentor Grant Bartow, who led a PC-12 flight department across the Mississippi River in Fort Madison, IA. Explaining that he took over the department when he was 24, Bartow said, "Everyone wants you to have experience, but no one wants to give it to you. What better way to help the future of aviation than by helping new aviators build experience."

'ROBUST DEDICATION'

Hernandez flew right seat at every opportunity, from short flights to Chicago Midway International Airport (MDW) to a



sev-en-day adventure to Monterey, CA, said Bartow. "Josh has a robust dedication to business aviation, and from the first day I met him at Quincy, he knew it was what he wanted to do."

Through Bartow, Hernandez met "an operator who allowed me to fly right seat in a King Air 90. He was a CFI, so that was doubly valuable, golden time for a person of my experience." That led to a skydiving job, flying a Cessna 182B in Hannibal, MO.

In a Facebook aviation group, Hernandez found a St. Louis aerial survey/mapping operation looking for a Cessna 206 pilot. Short of the required total time, he "asked if turbine time counted, and they made an exception. Then I applied to another operator and got my first jet job in the right seat of a Citation XLS. Two years later a cargo/charter operator hired me as second in command of a Lear 35 and pilot in command of a Beech Baron. It was a great experience, and it didn't slow down during COVID."

MAINTAINING CONNECTIONS

When he arrived in St. Louis, an IOC connection helped him meet a business aviation chief pilot. Maintaining that connection paid dividends later at a meeting of the Midwest Chief Pilot Roundtable. The chief pilot connected Hernandez with another chief pilot who was looking for promising job candidates. That led to his current role piloting a Gulfstream.

Now type rated as PIC in the G550, "it will be a couple of years before I step up to captain," Hernandez said. Being in Chicago and volunteering with CABAA as its vice president brings him joy. "Giving back to the organization means a lot to me. Ultimately, my goal is to become an essential member of the business aviation community, someone who makes my coworkers' efforts easier and the operation safer and more efficient." ❖

Learn about scholarship and mentoring programs at nbaa.org/students.

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MENTORING NETWORK

MENTORING NETWORK

Mentoring the next generation of business aviation professionals has never been more rewarding, and easy. Through NBAA, we will connect you with potential mentors providing guidance from experienced professionals, and let your journey of inspiration begin. You have the option to match up based on location, industry objectives and other factors to provide an engaging and fulfilling experience for both of you.

2024-25 NBAA Mentoring Network registration window will close in September.

mentoring.nbaa.org

***BUSINESS
AVIATION:***

ONE INDUSTRY, MANY CAREERS

PILOTS AREN'T THE ONLY
ONES ENJOYING CAREERS
IN BUSINESS AVIATION.



Perhaps one of the biggest misconceptions people considering a career in business aviation have about the industry is that it's only about pilots. There's no question that pilots are a critical part of the industry. They are the ones flying the aircraft, transporting people, medical supplies and other goods across the U.S., the continent and around the world.



But pilots aren't the only people with exciting and growing careers in business aviation. There are plenty of support and business-related professions, such as accounting, marketing and human resources, that are critical to the industry's many aircraft operators, FBOs and other businesses that don't require a license to fly.

"Everyone always asks me, 'Don't you want to fly?'" said Emily White, strategic sourcing manager of Wheels Up. "And I say, no, we need people on the ground."

In fact, White believes not having a pilot's license actually has been a benefit in her specific job.

"I work in strategic sourcing, part of our procurement team," said White, who has worked in business aviation for 15 years and joined Wheels Up in 2019. "I focus on flight operations and work on everything non-airframe related to keeping our planes in the air. So, my job is to go out and source the best products for us and ones that also are going to bring us the best cost savings across operations."

ONE INDUSTRY, MANY CAREERS

“

Financing, aircraft transactions, lawyers, dispatchers, flight attendants. There are a lot of ways to touch aviation, without having to have a pilot's license.”

SIERRA GRIMES
NBAA Senior Manager,
Government Affairs



Find Your Passion and Pursue It

Not having a pilot's license, she said, gives her a different perspective on the flight operations and pilots she supports.

“Not being a pilot gives me an ability to look at things from a broader lens, where maybe if I do something here, it's going to make it easier for them there,” she said. “With pilots, sometimes if it's not on the checklist, it may not get done.”

Has it ever been an issue for her in working with pilots?

“I got my dispatcher's license when I was working with a software company, even though I didn't need it,” White said. “But I did it because I wanted to have that knowledge. I can wing-walk an aircraft into a hangar. I can do a lot of things on the ground, so [not having a pilot's license] has not been a detriment at all.”

Her advice to anyone thinking about a career in business aviation who might be holding back because they don't have a pilot's license: find your passion and pursue it.

“There are so many jobs that can be done in this industry,” White said. “Lawyers, finance, CPA, taxes, marketing. There are so many different career avenues that fall into aviation that [business aviation] companies need. If you're a good PR person and love aviation, you can combine the two.”

‘Grow and Develop and Learn’

Sierra Grimes, another non-pilot working in the industry, supports NBAA as a member of the association’s government affairs team. She started her career at NBAA 11 years ago, working in registration for the association’s many events, including the annual NBAA Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE). The job required a fair amount of travel and interacting with people in the industry. “That’s where I learned about business aviation, our member companies and really got to know the lay of the land,” said Grimes.

A few years ago, Grimes was promoted to her current position – a new role created for her in recognition of her accomplishments at NBAA. “So, I was able to grow and develop and learn and be an advocate for the industry,” she said.

Has not having a pilot’s license been an issue for her?

“I will say there has been a learning curve, because I am not a pilot and I am not an aviator by training,” she said. “I have had to do double-time with researching and learning what the various acronyms and technical terms mean.”

With a lot of support from pilots and others on the NBAA team and across the industry, Grimes has cleared those hurdles and now is a valued member of NBAA and business aviation in support of its government affairs and education efforts.

It’s proof once again that you don’t have to be a pilot to have a business aviation career.

“The beauty about general aviation, specifically business aviation, is that you can be a part of this passionate

aviation community, while finding a job in practically any field,” Grimes said. “Financing, aircraft transactions, lawyers, dispatchers, flight attendants. There are a lot of ways to touch aviation, without having to have a pilot’s license.”

In fact, Grimes said companies in business aviation around the world are courting people in a variety of disciplines to fill needed positions as the industry steadily expands.

“Workforce development is top of mind in the industry globally,” she said. “Young people are advancing because of industry investment with apprenticeship and internship programs, where people actually see what they like and don’t like before they enter the workforce. You also have investment from policymakers, including grants to fund workforce programs and various policies to expand industry exposure and remove barriers of entry. So, this is a prime time for young people to get into business aviation.”

NBAA has ongoing professional development programs that support business aviation professionals to help them grow in their careers, including cutting-edge seminars, certification and professional development programs, and peer-to-peer networking.

These programs are offered in a variety of formats, including in print and online resources, through educational institutions, and in presentations given at NBAA’s industry events.

Learn more at nbaa.org/professional-development.





A Day in the Life of a Bizav Flight Attendant

If you excel at time management, organization and dealing with the unexpected, this may be the career for you.

A typical day for contract flight attendant Lesley Revuelto is rarely, well, typical. One day she might be in the air providing in-cabin service to passengers on a business jet, while another day she might be preparing meals for charter passengers flying to an international destination. Other days she might be on the ground, prepping for an upcoming flight by shopping for supplies or testing new inflight menu items from her home kitchen.

Then there are days like the one she was having in mid-June where she was using both her computer and her phone to simultaneously reach out to clients to book future flights. Based out of the Dallas-Fort Worth, TX-area, Revuelto said she spends a lot of time hustling for new contract assignments.

"It's a full-time job looking for part-time work," she said with a laugh. "Typically, I have a list of contacts I reach out to probably on a monthly basis to let them know my availability to line up work for, if not this month, usually the next month as well."

For the most part, Revuelto reaches out to people she's worked with previously.

"It's a mix," she said. "It's pilots and flight departments I have worked with in the past."

In this line of work, assignments often come through referrals.

"As a contractor, networking is absolutely key," Revuelto explained. "The work I get is from the people I know."

DIFFERENT FROM COMMERCIAL AIRLINES

Overseeing passenger safety is an essential duty for flight attendants in commercial airlines and business aviation, but serving as a business aviation FA is much more hands-on and multifaceted.

No matter the nature of the flight, or even the size of the crew, bizav FAs often spend more time preparing for flights than serving passengers and crew. FAs do it all, from planning inflight meals and provisioning the aircraft, to providing expert services. They also occasionally plan inflight and, in some cases, on-ground entertainment and activities for passengers. And, of course, they oversee on-board passenger safety.

When they're not flying, they're often prepping for the next trip. "Based on the fact that we never know where we're going, it's sort of like being in a ready state all the time," said Julie Kozma, a flight attendant aboard a family-owned business aircraft.

Kozma's position is unique among flight attendants, in that her aircraft is constantly flying somewhere.

"My airplane is overseas, and we sort of chase it around the world," Kozma said. "I don't want to say we're homeless, but we kind of are."



“

There are different people who work and fly with us on the plane, and they're on a first-name basis. It's very comfortable. It does have a sense of family.”

JULIE KOZMA

Flight Attendant for Family-Owned Business Aircraft

Revuelto's schedule and airplanes often change from week to week or month to month – from a charter or business aircraft to working on a family flight. But Kozma operates on a fairly regular schedule.

“I have a rotation that puts me with the airplane for two weeks and I stay with the airplane wherever it goes,” Kozma said. “So, in my job, instead of driving to the hangar, I need to jump on an airline and catch up with the airplane wherever it may be.”

Very often that's somewhere in Europe or other international locations. Kozma is the lead FA for a team of two flight attendants.

After her rotation, Kozma will return home while another flight attendant on her team takes over on the aircraft. There's always someone to cover sickness or vacations.

THE PLANNING BEGINS

Once Kozma gets called to join the aircraft, planning starts.

“It's planning the catering menu, making your catering strategy, and always thinking ahead, whether for one flight, or multiple days of flying” she said. “I might be ordering from the local caterer, purveying from specialty shops, working with hotel or restaurant chefs, along with lots of shopping to accommodate the needs of my passengers. You don't just go to one store and find everything you need.”

Once she arrives at the aircraft, things get even more fast-paced.

“We arrive at the aircraft two hours before departure,” Kozma said. “Not only am I bringing everything with me that I have accumulated, but the catering is being delivered simultaneously, full-on cabin preparations begin, many times taking every minute until the passengers arrive at the aircraft.”

Once on board, she begins cabin preparations.

“Typically, the cabin is always left in a completely ready

state, but you're putting out your newspapers, magazines, your fruit basket,” she said. “I am also getting catering put away and brewing coffee.”

Flight attendants also have to “expect the unexpected.”

“You may be preparing to have one passenger on a flight to New York, and on departure day they're taking three, not one,” Revuelto said. “So, when you're planning your meal, you have to think of how you can make that spread out. Whether it's the way you slice a steak, how you put it on a plate, or the order of service. You just think of ways to turn this one meal into three.”

FAs “have to be 100% mentally prepared at all times, to go from service, straight into a medical emergency, fire or an array of other multiple emergency situations,” Kozma said.

SENSE OF FAMILY

Given the challenges, what is it that Revuelto and Kozma, who both co-chair NBAA's Flight Attendants Committee, like about the job?

It's serving others, naturally.

“The aircraft I work on now, I've been with this owner and the family for nine years,” Kozma said. “It's a hug when they come on the plane. And there are different people who work and fly with us on the plane, and they're on a first-name basis. It's very comfortable. It does have a sense of family.”

What does it take to succeed as a bizav FA?

“Time management is so important,” Revuelto said.

“Organization also is really big, as well as forward thinking.”

Continuous training also is important. Often flight attendants must cover those costs themselves, which is why they encourage current and future flight attendants to check out the NBAA Flight Attendant/Flight Technician Committee's scholarship program.

Kozma adds, “We have lots of generous donors, whether it be monetary awards or training awards. Our scholarship program is for new and current flight attendants.”

“We have 36 scholarships that are free,” said Revuelto. “All you have to do is apply.”

The committee represents the interests of business aviation flight attendants and flight technicians in their roles as crewmembers aboard business aircraft. They coordinate an annual conference for flight attendants and flight technicians in conjunction with the NBAA Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE) and provide feedback to NBAA on issues relating to this position. ✦

Learn about NBAA's scholarship programs at nbaa.org/scholarships.

VETERANS IN BUSINESS AVIATION



BIZAV LEADERS SAY VETS ARE A NATURAL FIT

Successful pilots and technicians say the military prepared them well for the satisfying business aviation careers they enjoyed after their service.

In the critical search for qualified candidates to fill a widening gap in the industry workforce, business aviation often relies on the tens of thousands of military veterans discharged into civilian life each year. These professionals frequently leave the service armed with key interpersonal skills as well as valuable technology training, making them a potential asset to any flight operation.



“ We also understand camaraderie and the value in investing in your teammates – of being a good wingman. ”

- **STEWART D'LEON, NBAA Director of Environmental & Technical Services**



“ When you come out of the military, you carry over the skill sets of problem solving, adaptability and discipline, which translate very well to business aviation. ”

- **KEVIN FLYNN, Director of Maintenance, former USAF Crew Chief**



“ I knew I didn't want to go to college right after high school, so I joined the Navy. The Navy helped me focus on what I wanted to do – fly airplanes. ”

- **JEFF WOFFORD, Retired Director of Aviation**

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CONSIDER A CAREER IN BUSINESS AVIATION

As a student interested in aviation, you have plenty of options for your career path – including business aviation. Find out more about the aviation segment offering the greatest diversity of roles, aircraft and missions, as well as outstanding mentoring and networking opportunities.

nbaa.org/students



SEN. TAMMY DUCKWORTH (D-IL) is an Iraq War veteran, Purple Heart recipient and former assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. She serves on the Commerce, Science, & Transportation Committee and chairs the Senate's Aviation Safety, Operations and Innovation Subcommittee. In 2004, she was deployed to Iraq as a Blackhawk helicopter pilot for the Illinois Army National Guard where she was among the first handful of Army women to fly combat missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Duckworth served in the reserve forces for 23 years before retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 2014. After serving two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, she was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2016. Duckworth advocates for veterans, working families, job creation, rebuilding infrastructure and making college more affordable.

On Twitter
@SenDuckworth

Duckworth Encourages Women to Seek Aviation Careers

Q: You've championed policies to enhance the aviation workforce of the future. What are some of the policies that you believe will have the most impact on recruiting and retaining the next generation of aviation professionals?

As chair of the Senate Aviation Safety, Operations and Innovation Subcommittee, I'm committed to helping advance policies that modernize the FAA, create jobs and boost the aviation workforce while keeping the flying public safe. Our bipartisan Workforce Development and Recruitment Act would be a great start. It would triple annual funding levels for FAA Workforce Development Grants that support institutions that train pilots and aviation maintenance technicians from \$10 million to \$30 million, as well as create a new grant program for aviation manufacturing technical workers funded at \$10 million a year.

Q: As a veteran, what are your thoughts on the importance of creating pathways for military veterans to transition into the business aviation industry?

Right now, the aviation industry captures less than 10% of military aviation maintenance technicians. To help us tap into this talent and grow our aviation workforce as our aviation safety crisis worsens, we must do more to streamline the transition for military service members to go into civil aviation maintenance careers and increase FAA outreach and engagement on pathways to obtain civilian maintenance technician certifications. We should be doing everything we can to support our veterans and make sure they have long-lasting,

"We must do more to streamline the transition for military service members to go into civil aviation maintenance careers and increase FAA outreach and engagement on pathways to obtain civilian mechanic certifications."

good-paying careers after they've hung up their uniform – and expanding pathways for them into the aviation industry would be good for them and the flying public.

Q: What advice would you give student readers of this special issue of Business Aviation Insider to encourage them to enter the aviation industry?

After being among the first handful of Army women to fly combat missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom, I know how important it is to not just grow our aviation workforce, but to encourage women to seek careers in the aviation industry. It is frustrating that women are still dramatically underrepresented among pilots, maintenance technicians and other critical roles in our aviation workforce – especially at a time when we face such an acute need for more workers in this industry. There's nothing in the world quite like flying, and I'm proud to help lead the charge to bring more women into aviation careers and the entire industry as chair of the aviation subcommittee. ❖

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YOPRO GO!

Young professionals in business aviation are active, inspired and always asking how they can get involved. YoPro Go! is the answer. This program, with the help of the NBAA YoPro Council, gives you the tools to help bring aviation education and outreach, networking, advocacy and mentoring opportunities to your own community. Whatever your passion, there is a place for you in YoPro Go!

nbaa.org/yoprogo

DEDICATED TO HELPING BUSINESS ACHIEVE ITS HIGHEST GOALS.



APPLY FOR AVIATION SCHOLARSHIPS

The NBAA Charities scholarship program offers nearly \$100,000 annually in cash awards as tuition reimbursement for enrolled students. The following scholarships are offered annually, so be sure to check NBAA's website for full details and deadlines:

- Al Conklin and Bill de Decker Aviation Management Scholarship
- William M. Fanning Maintenance Scholarship
- Lawrence Ginocchio Aviation Scholarship
- UAA Janice K. Barden Aviation Scholarship
- Fred and Diane Fitts Aviation Scholarship
- John F. Rahilly Memorial Scholarship

nbaa.org/scholarships

Sign up for an NBAA student password at nbaa.org/password/student.