



THE NAVIGATOR

June 2021

Good News – Embry-Riddle Resumes Normal Operations

President Butler made the announcement 5/21 that due to personal discipline and perseverance over the past year and in large part to diligence and Eagle spirit, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is resuming normal operations. Effective immediately, masks will be optional for students, faculty, staff and guests at Embry-Riddle, in keeping with recently released U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance.

ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

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We are looking forward to in-person events and the new, new normal.
Speaking of which....

SAVE THE DATE! AEROSPACE ADVISORY BOARD SOCIAL AND FALL CAREER EXPO

AAB members....see following Page 4 for our Fall Social plan. And if you are interested in participating in the Career Expo during the same timeframe, please contact: hewerdik@erau.edu or 928-777-6270.



If you would like to contribute to "The Navigator," please contact Dawn Marcuse @ marcused@erau.edu

HISTORICAL NATIONAL CHAMPIONS JUAN MERKT

The Golden Eagles Flight Team Wins Historical National Championship

Our Golden Eagles Flight Team has made history again, this time winning another national championship in the 2021 NIFA SAFECON (National Intercollegiate Flying Association's Safety and Flight Evaluation Conference), making them 13-time national champions and the winningest collegiate flight team of the past 25 years.

NIFA SAFECON is to collegiate aviation what the Super Bowl is to the NFL or the Stanley Cup is to the NHL. In addition to the team's national championships, the Golden Eagles have won 35 consecutive Regional NIFA SAFECON championships.

"This was an amazing and well deserved accomplishment," said team faculty advisor Juan Merkt. "The entire team, assisted by head coach Shaun Shephard and others, worked very hard to achieve this historic win."

Being a member of the flight team is a tremendous time commitment. Members are required to attend ground event practice three hours a week and all day each Saturday. In preparation for competition, it often takes another 10-20 hours of studying each week to achieve peak performance. In addition, members spend dozens of hours practicing flying events each week, including precision landings and navigation.

The Covid-19 pandemic posed the biggest challenge to the team this year, affecting practice schedules, protocols and procedures. "But the team persevered through these challenges and overcame many obstacles as they prepared for Nationals", added Juan Merkt. In addition, this year's national competition, normally hosted in-person by one of the competing universities, took place virtually.

The 2022 NIFA SAFECON Nationals are scheduled for next May, in-person at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.



Members of the Golden Eagles Flight Team. **Front row, left to right:** Rowan Phlieger, Douglas Niemela, Jon Van Schooten, team captain Colin Ho-Tseung, Richard Santi, Matt Arnovick, Jamie Gallagher. **Middle row, left to right:** Carol Martin, Cami Johnson, Karl Neserke, Jon Ballard, Josh Wiese, Will Hunt, Zoltan Belady, Mike Reitmeyer, Matt Rodgers, Zachary Sornoza, Hayden Morse, Natalie Dow, Nick Tan, Karen Lau, John Ritter, head coach Shaun Sheppard. **Back row, left to right:** faculty advisor Dr. Juan Merkt, assistant coach Farrell Harris, Brian La Fetra, Erich Norris, Gabe Witt, Luke Miller, Hayden Owen, Logan Haynes, Joseph Bryant, Anna Scott, Charlie Vandersteen, George Fiscu, Camden Dellar, Kenrick Vail.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

We are delighted that the Captain Jason Dahl Scholarship Fund has awarded scholarships to two College of Aviation Prescott Campus students this year:

- \$5000 scholarship to Jamie Gallagher
- \$1000 scholarship to Ryan Plutowski



Congratulations

AEROSPACE ADVISORY BOARD SOCIAL—SAVE THE DATE!

Plans are underway for the “Fall Aerospace Advisory Board Social!” This will be held during the same timeframe as the Career Expo and Homecoming (OctoberWest), so we are hopeful that many of our board members will be able to attend. Here are the details:

When: Thursday, September 30th from 4:00pm—7:00pm

Where: Spruance House, Prescott Campus

What: Appetizers and Beverages (Beer, Wine, Soda, etc.)

This leaves time for you to have the option of leaving campus to have dinner in Prescott with colleagues, fellow alumni, etc.

Why: Simply socializing and getting to know your fellow board members, committee, and campus leadership!



A Fall AAB Meeting will be announced soon...the plan is to have program specific meetings. Stay tuned!