

Challenges

A. Sustainability

Sustainability for the proposed two-year commercial pilot diploma program will be driven by a good reputation and an ability to turn out competent northern pilots while still having a continual pool of students.

Creating such a program involves:

- Continual networking and marketing with potential students and future employers,
- Program content that is safe and fulfilling to students, and desirable to future employers,
- Successful completion of the program by students and placement with future employers, and
- Continuous feedback from former students and employers regarding ways to strengthen the program.

The manner in which the proposed program is meeting these issues includes:

- Partnering with a well-established program with a good safety record and proven curriculum,
- Partnering with a well established local flight school that also exhibits a good safety record and is embedded in the Northern Pilot Network,
- Working with local school districts to foster interest in northern aviation career tracks and increase awareness of what life is really like as a pilot in the north, and
- Working with the District of Vanderhoof and community partners for infrastructure support and business opportunities.

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Despite this planning, there may exist a challenge in convincing some Northern Air Operators the possession of a diploma is a true asset in the commercial pilot industry. In the Northern Air Operator survey, forty-six percent of respondents stated they did not feel there was an advantage in hiring new pilots who possess at least a two-year aviation diploma and commercial pilot's license vs. hiring those who possess only a commercial pilot's license. Another twenty percent did not know how they felt on this issue, either because they did not know enough about commercial pilot diploma programs or they were of the opinion an applicant with a diploma did not stand out simply on the basis of having a diploma. This also would seem to be supported by the fact survey respondents were nearly unanimous in stating the importance of an applicant's overall general attitude and personal initiative when it came to being successful in the industry.

There is little disagreement attitude and initiative go a long way in serving a pilot throughout his/her career. Good pilots exist long before they are ever trained because it takes a special combination of personality, drive, and passion to be attracted to the profession in the first place. But, what if that drive/initiative could be supplemented and honed with training in business and marketing, interpersonal communication skills, and management in a professional environment? The goal of the proposed program is not to provide

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diploma program in Vanderhoof, BC, to train student

proposed program becomes a serious consideration. Four RCAF barracks, originally built for WWII, are now privately owned and occupied and stand at the edge of the Vanderhoof airfield. If space is available and compatible with regional planning efforts, it might be possible to run additional water and electrical lines past these barracks to a nearby area where five to seven mobile trailers or three to four modular homes could be placed as student housing for the proposed program. Each modular home would have five bedrooms, at least two washrooms, laundry, natural gas, electricity, sewer and water service. This endeavor would play a vital role in the student's success rate for the proposed program, and would necessitate key involvement from the College's partnerships with the District of Vanderhoof and local industry.

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Students who enroll in the proposed program from across northwest Canada will be attracted to the ease at which they can acquire flight time in the uncongested airspace around the Vanderhoof area. Current plans by the District to add AWOS and flight tracking abilities to the locale will enhance students' attraction to the area. One vital piece still missing at the airport is a terminal/dispatch building. Although this buildi