Aviation Program Acquires State-of-the-Art Flight Simulator

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Capt. Stephen Speed (left), director of the aviation program, and Travis Jones, junior aviation and professional pilot major, pose with the new flight simulator.

DSU's Aviation Program has moved into a new training era with its acquisition of a comprehensive Advanced Aviation Training Device (AATD) – commonly known as a flight simulator.

In addition to actually flying one of the four types of planes available among the Aviation Program's fleet of 10 aircraft, students are now able to get instrument practice on a simulator the most advanced AATD that the program has ever had.

"We previously had two training devices, but they were limited in their simulation capabilities, as they were only able to simulate a Piper Warrior plane and only simulate flights in the New York and New Jersey areas," said Capt. Stephen Speed, director of the DSU Aviation Program.

He said the new simulator can simulate the Piper Warrior and the other planes in the DSU fleet – Piper Arrow, Piper Tomahawk and the multi-engine Piper Seneca – as well as 30 other types of planes, including a jet aircraft.

"In addition, this device can simulate flights anywhere in the United States, as well as in Canada and Mexico," Capt. Speed said.

The $28,000 flight simulator was acquired this fall after about three years of financial planning and a Request-for-Proposal process in which several types of flight simulators were evaluated and various vendors sites were visited.

Capt. Speed said that in addition to helping students refine their instrument skills, the new simulator will be another way that students can accumulate flight hours.

Travis Jones, practices a simulated flight on the new training device.

"The simulator will help when the weather is not good for flying," Capt. Speed said. "The FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) allows for the use of 50 hours on the simulator to go toward flying time for a commercial pilots rating.

DSU's Aviation Program – founded in 1987 – offers Aviation bachelor's degrees in Professional Pilot and Aviation Management. The new flight simulator along with the fleet of planes are based at the Delaware Air Park near Cheswold, Del., a facility operated by the Delaware River & Bay Authority just a few miles from the DSU main campus.

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