NEWS RELEASE

February 13, 2020

Purdue Global, Sterling Flight Training partner on aviation degree program

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Purdue University Global and Sterling Flight Training announced a partnership Thursday (Feb. 13) to address the projected global demand for aviation professionals over the next 20 years.

The program is the next step in a collaboration between Purdue Global and Purdue University’s School of Aviation and Transportation Technology – announced in June 2019 – to combine the quality of West Layette’s flight training program with the flexibility and affordability that Purdue Global offers.

“When this initiative was introduced last June, we knew that it was a great example of how Purdue Global and Purdue West Lafayette would and will continue to work together to create programs that meet the needs of employers and students while leveraging both institutions’ key strengths,” said Betty Vandenbosch, Purdue Global Chancellor. “Now, we are excited to add a premier flight school in Sterling Flight Training to complete the equation as we all work together to address an anticipated major pilot shortfall in the coming years.”

Students accepted into the program will complete their Bachelor of Science degree courses online through Purdue Global, which includes aviation and general education classes from Purdue Global’s current inventory, while completing professional flight training and laboratory courses at Sterling in Jacksonville, Florida.

“At Sterling we are leveraging our decades of experience in airline operations to create future aviators that are job-ready,” Sterling CEO and former Republic Airways COO Wayne Heller said. “We are excited to partner our experience with Purdue’s distinguished professional pilot program to develop the next generation of pilots.”

Purdue Global expects to begin taking applications for the program later this year, with details about the launch to follow by the end of March.

Sara Sander, dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Purdue Global, said the key benefit to students from this partnership is greater personalization.

“The ability to take the majority of courses online allows students greater flexibility and options that they may not have had otherwise,” Sander said.

... more ...
Progressing from private pilot to certified flight instructor (CFI), graduates will have the foundation essential to serve as flight instructors and accrue additional flight experience required by airlines to get hired as an airline pilot. Upon reaching CFI status, participants enrolled in the program can begin teaching fellow students and earn compensation for their work in addition to flight hours, which can help with education costs and living expenses.

Purdue’s School of Aviation and Transportation Technology, one of six departments and schools in the Purdue Polytechnic Institute, is recognized worldwide as a leader in aviation education and will provide its expertise in curriculum development, faculty hiring and accreditation by the Aviation Accreditation Board International.

As United States airline pilots approach the federally mandated retirement age of 65, the industry faces a shortage of pilots. Reports forecast a need for 804,000 pilots over the next 20 years, and airlines are already finding it hard to fill open positions. This new program is designed to get students flying immediately, shortening the timeline to professional pilot in order to meet this demand. The multiyear agreement with Sterling Flight Training calls for additional training centers across the nation as demand warrants and contemplates the possibility of partnering with smaller flight schools to reach traditional Purdue Global students who require access to flight training options closer to home.

**About Purdue University Global**

Purdue University Global is the extreme personalization online university, providing students the competitive edge to advance in their chosen careers. It offers a hyper-tailored path for students to earn an associate, bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral degree, based on their work experience, desired pace, military service, previous college credits and other considerations – no matter where they are in their life journey. Purdue Global serves more than 31,000 students (as of January 2020), most of whom earn their degree online. It also operates several regional locations nationwide. Purdue Global is a nonprofit, public university accredited by The Higher Learning Commission. It is affiliated with Purdue University’s flagship institution, a highly ranked public research university located in West Lafayette, Indiana. Purdue University also operates two regional campuses in Fort Wayne and Northwest, Indiana, as well as serving close to 6,000 science, engineering and technology students at the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) campus. For more information, please visit [www.PurdueGlobal.edu](http://www.PurdueGlobal.edu).

**About Sterling Flight Training**

Sterling Flight Training LLC, a portfolio company of Wexford Capital LP, is Jacksonville’s premiere flight school, offering programs from private pilot to professional pilot. Backed by a team of airline industry veterans with more than 100 years of combined aviation experience, the Sterling
team has led the training initiatives for thousands of airline pilots across the United States. Students receive training they can trust with safety top of mind. The school is FAA and VA approved, and offers degrees through both in-house training programs and university affiliations. For more information, visit sterlingsflight.com.

###

Media contact, Purdue: Tom Schott, 765-494-9318, tschott@purdue.edu
Media contact, Sterling: Ashley Roy, 904-639-4898, aroy@sterlingflight.com

Sources: Betty Vandenbosch, bvandenbosch@purdueglobal.edu
Wayne Heller, wheller@sterlingflight.com
Sara Sander, ssander@purdueglobal.edu