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In this photo:

The University's Aviation Program is expanding its fleet with 10 of the pictured 10 Vulcanair V1.0 aircraft.

Aviation Program to get New Planes

Wednesday, January 23, 2019

The Delaware Higher Education Economic Development Fund (DHEEDF) has announced a \$3.4 million grant to Delaware State University to significantly expand its Aviation Program, the only one of its kind among Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and among the very best aviation education programs in the nation.

"This is an extraordinary vote of confidence in the quality and significance of our program and in its importance to Delaware, and to the aviation industry nationwide," University President Wilma Mishoe said. "This grant allows us to move forward with plans to first replace our current aircraft fleet, and then double it over the next decade. We expect that it will also help us both attract and train more professionals to our community and contribute significantly to the tax base in Delaware."

Dr. Mishoe noted that Delaware State University's Aviation Program not only boasts 100% career placement of pilot graduates within a year of graduation but is also "the largest producer of pilots and Aviation professionals of color in the country."

Representative Debra Heffernan, co-chair of the DHEEDF and the Bond Bill Committee, said, "We're proud to support the University in the continued improvement of its Aviation Program." She explained that during the application and evaluation process, "We were very impressed by the quality of the University's program and its graduates, making this a smart investment for Delaware."

The University has placed an initial order for ten Vulcanair V1.0 FAA-certified single-engine aircraft from Ameravia Inc. (Vulcanair Aircraft distributor for the U.S.). The first new aircraft arrive in April. Ameravia will also be the University's source for additional aircraft and material for maintenance support.

“Our proposal also contributes to building a broader, better economic vitality in Greater Kent County,” said Dr. Tony Allen, Provost and Executive Vice President of the University. “Growing our Aviation Program requires increased aircraft service and significant enlargement of our hangar space at the Delaware Air Park in Cheswold. Equally important is the opportunity to develop deeper relationships with the local aviation industry, Dover Air Force Base, and the Delaware River and Bay Authority.”

Between construction and new positions for mechanics, flight instructors, and support staff, the University anticipates the creation of hundreds of new jobs in the Greater Kent County area over the next few years.

Delaware State University’s Aviation Program has its roots in the Federal initiative that created the famous “Tuskegee Airmen” in 1939-1940. “That’s why we paint the tails of our aircraft ‘Tuskegee Red,’” said Lt. Col. (Ret.) Michael Hales, the program’s director. Its modern incarnation traces back to a 1987 revitalization under its founding director, the late Dr. Daniel Coons.

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