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CTI White Paper

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The FAA Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative (AT-CTI) Program has 36 partner institutions across the United States which offer a variety of accredited academic degrees and actively promote a multicultural and diverse collegiate environment.

Strained CTI Partnership. After more than two decades of working with the FAA to supply highly educated candidates for the position of air traffic controller, the FAA, appears to have abandoned this partnership leaving 3,000 to 3,500 AT-CTI graduates and current air traffic control students without portfolio. Many AT-CTI graduates and current students have amassed upwards of \$100,000 each in student loan debt in pursuit of air traffic degrees. In place of this program, the FAA opted to employ a general public announcement seeking to recruit U.S. citizens without regard to air traffic control background or education to fulfill future personnel requirements at air traffic control facilities. AT-CTI graduates who currently have a valid AT-SAT (Air Traffic Selection and Training) score were forced to recomplete through a Biographical Questionnaire for the “opportunity” to take or retake the AT-SAT. The latest Biographical Questionnaire tested roughly 28,000 applicants to yield about 2,200 individuals who were eligible to move on to take or retake the AT-SAT aptitude test.

Funds Wasted. At a cost of somewhere between \$500 and \$800 per test, the taxpayers of this country will see a waste of between \$1.5M (3,000 applicants X \$500) and \$2.8M (3,500 applicants X \$800). A Freedom of Information Act request asking for exact numbers was filed with the FAA on April 4, 2014, but to date that information has not been provided.

CTI Diversity Ignored. This new process appears to be aimed at generating increased diversity in the FAA’s workforce. Embry-Riddle applauds the FAA effort at increased opportunity and diversity. We believe that we and other AT-CTI schools have met or exceeded our responsibility to offer higher education opportunities to a diverse group of students. In fact, the FAA’s own documentation appears to support this assertion. In a FAA study during the 2012-13 school year, a self-identification questionnaire was designed to reflect enrollment statistics for AT-CTI schools. The questionnaire generated the following information about the students who enrolled in AT-CTI schools in 2012-13: 63.9 percent were White, 23.7 percent were females, 14.7 percent were Latina/Latino, 11.4 percent were Black/African-Americans, 5.5 percent were Asians. Continuous efforts are made to further diversify student populations at institutes of higher learning. If the FAA’s effort was, in fact, an attempt to increase diversity within their workforce, the aforementioned data suggests that they would have accomplished their goal through the Collegiate Training Initiative.

Remediation. Based upon the above discussion, it is clear that AT-CTI students across the country have been led down a very expensive path by the FAA. In an attempt to remedy this situation, we suggest the following:

- Should the FAA be unable to produce the necessary hiring numbers from the current group of individuals who passed the Biographical Questionnaire/AT-SAT and scored in the “well qualified” range of 85% or above, the FAA should then draw from the most recent list of CTI graduates who previously scored in the “well qualified” range.
- Because of the delays and changes in the FAA hiring process CTI graduates who have passed AT-SAT and have been waiting on the current inventory should be able to keep their eligibility status for air traffic controller positions with the Federal Aviation Administration for an extended three year period of time.
- AT-SAT scores should remain valid for an extended three year period of time.
- All candidates should have a fair and equal opportunity to become an air traffic controller regardless of socio-economic status, race, gender or ethnicity.

- A higher education entry (AT-CTI) track should remain in place and AT-CTI graduates should be a significant part of the FAA's air traffic hiring strategy.