

**Abstract**

Economic realities have begun to motivate public higher education institutions to reexamine their roles in the overall educational process and the associated funding mechanisms that are extant. Such reexamination typically includes both the public/private funding mix and the degree to which a workforce-oriented focus should be employed across curricula. Partnerships between academia and industry are a potential answer to the questions thereby raised, and while such partnerships are nothing new, related structural innovations can improve educational and employment outcomes for students. Industry-sponsored institutional research centers can play a major role in facilitating these partnerships. One such center, the recently-developed Advanced Aviation Analytics Institute for Research (A<sup>3</sup>IR-CORE), is focused on addressing operational challenges within the aviation industry by actively involving both graduate and undergraduate student researchers working closely with faculty mentors in a highly-collaborative multidisciplinary environment. This article describes the structure and function of the Institute and provides an early glimpse of the positive student educational and employment outcomes that have thus far been achieved.