

Student follows path to rewarding world of airline flying

By Christopher Blair
Emerald Contributor

Mike Black is pursuing the ideal career: doing what he enjoys most and getting paid for it.

"I love to fly," the University senior said recently. "Knowing that soon I'll be paid to do it is really incredible," he said.

Black has spent the past two years completing flight training through the McKenzie Flying Service Professional Pilot Program. His dream isn't just to fly, but to do so as a commercial airline pilot.

Black said he plans to gain certification in the operation of large jet aircraft.

"I have a lot of friends who are not sure about what they make a career out of. I'm happy to say that I have a career at the end of all of this," Black said.

Commercial airlines, from international operations to smaller, regional commuter lines, are growing alarmed at the decreasing number of professional pilots in the U.S.

Military aviators, who in the past provided the bulk of airline pilot jobs, are more frequently choosing to re-enlist or retire. Airlines are responding by recruiting pilots from training programs such as the one in which Black is enrolled.

McKenzie's program, in conjunction with Horizon Air, a commuter-line based in the Pacific Northwest, supervises the flight education for pilot trainees. Horizon Air finishes the job to fit its specifications.

Black is nearing completion

of the first phase of the three-part program. In this phase, the student is certified by the Federal Aviation Administration in areas of flight, navigation, emergency procedures and flying with the aid of instruments in poor weather and visibility.

Black began his aviation education by learning to fly a single-engine Cessna 152. After 50 hours in the air and 15 on the ground with pre- and post-flight instruction, he became qualified to fly up to six passengers in clear weather.

After obtaining this basic pilot's license, however, Black decided to turn his interest into a career pursuit.

"At first I thought it was a neat thing to do, but after I got my private pilot rating, I thought it would be neat to continue on to get my instrument rating, and after that I got ideas about making it a livelihood," Black said.

According to McKenzie general manager Harvey Birdseye, students who complete the first phase are ready to set their sights on commercial aviation by entering Phase II.

"Phase II is where I groom these people specifically to become airline pilots," Birdseye said.

Students in this phase are involved with the freight flights to Portland that McKenzie makes for Purolator Courier.

"They are responsible for a pre-set schedule. They get to fly in spite of the crummy weather. They have to meet a schedule on the other end," Birdseye



Photo by Ted Shepler

University student Mike Black stands next to a twin-engine Cessna 340, which he learned to fly in the McKenzie Flying Service Professional Pilot Program.

said. "That's just simply airline flying, that's what you have to go and do."

The Phase II curriculum also includes applied physics and math, radar and weather interpretation, and what Black calls "charm school for pilots" — an education in how airline pilots should present themselves.

"The way an individual uses the microphone when he talks to people in an airplane can either invoke a vision among

the passengers that they've got a bunch of jerks up there ('Oh my god, what am I doing in this airplane?') or, if he's skilled at using his words to generate confidence, it can change the way people view the carrier," Birdseye said.

Phase II also teaches the pilot to fly Horizon Air's twin-turboprop 16-passenger SA-227 Metroliner.

Those who finish the second phase of training are referred to

Horizon Air, where they polish what they've learned at McKenzie. Following this, the airline's chief pilot will evaluate the student. If all goes well, the student may be ready to be considered an airline pilot with 750 hours of flight time logged.

McKenzie will accept anyone into its program who is willing to devote the time and money to becoming a pilot. The cost can run as high as \$25,000, paid in incremental blocks of \$500.

Celebrate...

WELLNESS WEEK FALL '87

On Campus at U of O

Wednesday, October 21st SAFER SEX DAY

12:00-2:00pm PRESENTATION ON AIDS

A theatre group will present a play on AIDS. There will be a question/ answer session in which Shanti and the Willamette AIDS Council will answer questions.

4:00-6:00pm PRESENTATION BY RICHARD P. KEELING

Dr. Richard P. Keeling, who is a nationally recognized authority on AIDS, is currently the Director of the University of Virginia Student Health Center and is also Chair of the American College Health Association's Task Force on AIDS. Dr. Jim Jackson, Director of the University of Oregon's Health Center, has highly recommended Dr. Keeling. Dr. Keeling is the author of an educational video tape, "AIDS Reducing the Risks," which has been shown on this campus and other campuses nationwide. Dr. Keeling is the editor of a report, "AIDS on the College Campus." Dr. Keeling will discuss the AIDS concern on college campuses.

8:00- PRESENTATION BY STEPHEN BECK

Stephen Beck, Director of the National Association of People With AIDS, will speak about his experiences in his role as Director.

LOCATIONS OF EVENTS

All events take place in the Gumwood Room from 11:30am-10:00pm

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