



NEWS RELEASE

## Kansas State Polytechnic partners with Republic Airline for pilot pipeline program

2018-04-16

SALINA — Professional pilot students on the **Kansas State University Polytechnic Campus** have a new opportunity to directly connect with their industry and secure employment before graduation through a recently signed agreement with Republic Airline.

Kansas State Polytechnic is now a partner in Republic Airline's Aviation Career Pipeline Interview Program, which is designed to give future pilots a defined path from college to career. The program provides flight students an opportunity to interview for a first officer position with the Midwest-based regional carrier after earning their instrument certificate. Upon a successful interview, students receive a conditional job offer that is preserved as they continue to build the required flight hours and complete their degree.

"Our mission at Kansas State Polytechnic is to provide our students with the best educational experience possible and that includes professional connections and employment opportunities," said Verna Fitzsimmons, CEO and dean of the campus. "Republic Airline is a respected regional carrier that cultivates a supportive and success-driven atmosphere and we're proud to partner with them to continue offering our professional pilot students valuable career options."

Students working on their instrument certificate typically achieve it as a freshman or sophomore, meaning, through Republic Airline's Aviation Career Pipeline Interview Program, they could have a job lined up more than two years before graduating. Students hired for provisional employment with Republic Airline are called RJet Cadets and receive mentorship while they are still in school. In addition, when reaching flight training milestones, pilot students are given special apparel and gear and are invited to attend exclusive company events. After earning their degree

and reaching the airline transport pilot minimums of 1,000 hours of flight time, cadets can officially commit to the regional carrier and begin employment as a first officer.

Jacob Mitchell, a senior in the professional pilot program at Kansas State Polytechnic, has been both hired for a first officer position and selected as an ambassador for Republic Airline. While he says the company offers a variety of advantages, what has impressed him the most is its similarity to his school.

"I picked Republic Airline for much the same reason I picked K-State: the people," said Mitchell, from Foxfield, Colorado. "When I first toured the campus, what stood out to me the most was how nice and personable everyone is. You could tell K-State is a family and I feel like Republic provides that environment as well. It has been important to me to continue in a place with an equivalent mentality."

As a Republic ambassador, Mitchell helps answer questions other students at Kansas State Polytechnic may have about the airline and works with those interested in employment by supporting their interview process and transition into the cadet program.

"Our college partnerships enable us to have a unique presence on the campuses where we recruit," said Tonya Gilbert, managing director of talent acquisition for Republic Airline. "Students and faculty know that we have a vested interest not only in hiring alumni but also in supporting their program and connecting them to resources within the industry."

Kansas State Polytechnic and Republic Airline participated in the Aviation Career Pipeline Interview Program signing April 7 at the school's annual open house.

To learn more about the professional pilot bachelor's degree option at Kansas State Polytechnic, contact admissions at 785-826-2640 or [polytechnic@k-state.edu](mailto:polytechnic@k-state.edu).