

# Reality Check

## (or how to be successful in the Flight Science degree)

Students must understand what is required to be successful in the Flight Science degree. Lack of funds, lack of a reliable vehicle, holding down an outside job, and not having enough time to study are common issues that reduce the likelihood of students graduating from the Flight Science program.

- 1) Typically, students are notified of degree acceptance as soon as they meet minimum requirements. Students need to consider what will happen if they cannot enter the degree as planned. Each student needs to have a secondary plan on what they will do if they cannot enter the degree. This back-up plan needs to be in-place well *before* the beginning of the semester of planned entry into the degree.
- 2) The combination of state grants, federal grants, and federal student loans will not cover all the costs of any semester. In some semesters, as much as \$10,000 may not be covered by financial aid even for students who qualify for the maximum amount of aid. Students will need to find additional sources of funding that is above and beyond what financial aid will cover.
- 3) Typically, students using financial aid as a primary funding source must also use Parent Plus loans and/or private student loans. Both of these types of loans require a co-signer with excellent credit. If a co-signer cannot be found that the lender will approve, then the loan will not be funded, and the student cannot enter the degree.
- 4) Prior to **EVERY** semester, if funds are not on deposit, or lined up through financial aid and/or private loans, or are being provided by VA benefits (or a combination of these), the student will be dropped from the flying lab course approximately 5 calendar days before the semester starts. Students still have the first two weeks of the semester (one week in the summer) to add the class back in if they finish getting the funding.
- 5) The entire A.S. degree program (including General Education classes) costs approximately \$60,000 for students under 220 lbs. and approximately \$66,000 for students between 221-250 lbs. The College does not have airplanes with the capacity for students over 250 lbs. These listed costs do not include room, board, cost of transportation, FAA testing fees, flight lab equipment, and other typical college fees. See *Course Progression and Costs* online document for more details.
- 6) The college is purchasing its own airplanes (the Skyleader 600). When those airplanes are available, the cost of the degree will go down. It is expected these airplanes may be available the summer of fall of 2024.

- 7) A student may be able to find funding for the first year and then not be able to find funding for the second year. If unable to finish all 24 months of flight training classes (all six semesters), the student will **NOT** be able to get a job as a pilot (flight instructor) to pay back student loans. It is highly recommended that students only start this program if they have extremely high confidence that they can fund the program across the entire 24 months.
- 8) Students need to apply for all types of financial aid and student loans as soon as possible prior to the beginning of each semester. If using VA benefits, students need to apply for those VA benefits at Reedley College as soon as possible.
- 9) Students need to consider what will happen if all the financing cannot be lined-up for the semester. Each student needs to have a secondary plan on what they will do if funding does not go as planned.
- 10) Typical college classes require an overall 70% score for the semester to pass a class. Flight Science ground schools (such as FLGHT 101) require an 80% to pass. The students who pass these courses are highly motivated and spend much more time (2-3 times more) studying and preparing than students in typical college classes.
- 11) Most flying lab classes (such as FLGHT 106) require students to pass oral and flying exams. A 98% correct score is required to pass the oral exam. The flying exam requires 100% of the maneuvers in the airplane to be done correctly. The students who pass flying labs are highly motivated and spend much more time (2-3 times more) studying and preparing than students in typical college classes.
- 12) Students who participate in a study group multiple times per week are far more likely to pass the ground school classes and far more likely to pass the oral exams. The vast majority of students who fail ground schools and oral exams are students who did not participate in a student group.
- 13) Students must study and prepare for Flight Science courses far more than is done in typical college courses. Flight Science students must plan to do homework, study, and participate in study groups 15-20 hours *per week* just on FLGHT courses. Time spent on other college course attendance and homework is in addition to this 15-20 hours per week.
- 14) Students may need as much as 20 hours per week just to be at the airport to accomplish the flying labs.
- 15) It is highly recommended that Flight Science students work little or none while in this degree. Per week, a student may need to spend 10-15 hours in classrooms and simulator labs, up to 20 hours at the airport, 15-20 hours per week doing homework and studying, plus 5-10 hours a week driving to/from classes and the airport. This adds up to 50-65 hours per week of time that is needed to succeed in the Flight Science degree.

- 16) Students who work at a job during the Flight Science degree are far less likely to complete the degree. Zero students have completed the degree and were also working full-time.
- 17) Students must be able to read out of a Pilot Operating Handbook, textbooks, federal aviation regulations and understand what they read. Students must also perform simple math (add, subtract, multiply, and divide) in their heads and learn to use aeronautical charts and graphs. It is recommended that students who earned less than a "B" grade in any high school English class or less than a "B" grade in any high school math class take a semester of math or English before entering this degree.
- 18) Students must have access to a reliable vehicle and the funds required to maintain and repair that vehicle plus pay for fuel and insurance. With academic and simulator classes at the Reedley College campus and flying labs at the airport, students must travel nearly every day (including some weekend flying). Consistent failure to be in class or fly at the airport will cause the student to fail to a FLGHT course. The cost of a reliable vehicle, maintenance, insurance, and fuel is above and beyond what is listed in the *Course Progression and Costs* online document.
- 19) Each FLGHT course is only offered once a year. If a student needs to repeat a class (due to illness or to academic problems), that class will not be offered until one year later. FLGHT courses are lock-step in that they must be taken in the required sequence. It is highly recommended that students complete each FLGHT course on the first attempt, otherwise, the student will have to wait a year before they can repeat that course and start-up the degree again.
- 20) Students must pass a Federal Aviation Administration medical exam as part of the degree application process. If an applicant has certain medical conditions, it may take months for the FAA to approve a medical certificate. It is highly recommended that students take this exam three or more months before the first semester of classes. See the *FAA Medical* online document for more details.
- 21) Some students must apply for a Fresno-Yosemite airport ID badge during mandatory New Student Orientation the week before the beginning of classes. To receive this badge, *students must pass a criminal background check* and pay approximately \$75 to the city of Fresno. Students must hold a state driver's license (not a state ID) to receive this security badge. Failure to receive and maintain a Fresno airport ID badge will cause a student to be dropped from a flying lab.
- 22) Many students have never flown in a small airplane. Some students have dropped out of this degree a few weeks into the first semester because they did not enjoy it. It is highly recommended that all prospective students take one or two introductory flight lessons in a small airplane before entering the degree.
- 23) Students using VA benefits must be aware of the details in the document: *VA Benefits* online document.