Professional Women Controllers, Inc.
An Association of Air Traffic Control Specialists

2018 PWC NATIONAL TRAINING CONFERENCE
— WASHINGTON, DC —

April 23–26, 2018

PWC 2018

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Founded in 1932, Vaughn College is a private, four-year college that enrolls more than 1,500 students in master’s, bachelor’s and associate degree programs in aviation, engineering, technology, and management on its main campus in New York City and online. The College offers programs covering all aspects of aviation including flight, air traffic control (ATC), aviation maintenance, airport management, airline management aeronautical engineering and avionics.

Vaughn College was recognized as having the highest upward mobility rate among 2,137 colleges nationwide in 2016 in a The New York Times article. Vaughn was noted as “an institution doing more to impact social mobility for those who start from less fortunate means”, and is listed as the top institution in the nation for moving students from the bottom 40 percent to the top 40 percent in income. Vaughn has also been ranked a top regional college in the north by U.S. News and World Report for the eighth year in a row, a top college for veterans, and a top college for your money by Money Magazine.

Air traffic control has been a specialty at the institution for the last two decades. Vaughn College was at the forefront of ATC training as one of the first of 13 institutions to enter into an agreement in 1999 with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), when they created the Air Traffic Collegiate Training Initiative (AT-CTI). The program was designed to meet the employment demands of the FAA, following the required retirement of controllers from the 1980s. The AT-CTI designation enabled Vaughn-recommended graduates to qualify for the FAA’s aptitude exam. In order to be recommended, students take specific coursework in flight, ATC basics and weather. Recommended graduates, who pass the FAA screening and begin training at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, are eligible to bypass some of the basic training.

Following a 2013 hiring freeze, with two anticipated waves of retirement (from 2018 to 2021 and from 2036 to 2039), and the number of air traffic controllers at a 27-year low, the shortage is threatening to increase flight delays. The critical need for new air traffic controllers represents an exciting aviation career opportunity for students. Vaughn College is currently recognized by the FAA as one of only 33 AT-CTI partner institutions in the country and one of three in the Northeast. You will find Vaughn graduates working in ATC towers in all major New York metro airports and across the country.

Vaughn also has a fast-track program that enables students who received an associate or bachelor’s degree from another college or university, in an appropriate business-related field like management, to take an additional 30 credits of core courses in aviation, management and ATC. Applicants who have earned an academic associate or bachelor’s degree in a non-business related field are also eligible for the fast-track program by taking an additional three to 21 credits in math and business, depending on their undergraduate study.

Outside recognition is the evidence that a Vaughn education is transformative,” said Vaughn President Dr. Sharon B. DeVivo. “We know that when a student graduates that they are on the pathway to a lifetime of success.”
In 2013, Vaughn purchased ATC simulation equipment, including tower and radar and changed the curriculum to provide simulation-intensive training. For those who attend Vaughn and train in the ATC simulators, the training is an advantage. Students learn on the same airspace the FAA uses at its training academy so those who take the coursework leave with a jumpstart. “The quality of our simulation experience has changed the nature of the program and the success of graduates at the FAA Academy,” said Domenic Proscia, Vice President of Training.

The ATC program is popular with students, and outside the classroom students participate in the Vaughn Air Traffic Control Organization (VATCO) which offers educational workshops, speaker series, and networking opportunities and its current president and vice president are women. The local chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives, Inc. (AAAE) a national organization, works to promote, develop and instill professional attitudes in students who are engaged in the study of airport development and administration, and the Vaughn College chapter of Women in Aviation International (WAI) provides networking, education, mentoring and scholarship opportunities for women (and men) who are striving for challenging and fulfilling careers in the aviation and aerospace industries.

“We strive to offer students opportunities to achieve professional success because we are a community invested in their personal and professional lives,” said DeVivo. Ninety-seven percent of Vaughn graduates are employed, 81 percent in their field of study, or for those continuing their education, within one year of graduation.

NATCA and FAA Seek to Improve Work Environments Through “Respect” Initiative

NATCA and the FAA began a collaborative effort to identify potential safety improvements related to human factors in the National Airspace System (NAS) in 2010. The Professional Standards Program was the first initiative created through this effort. NATCA and the FAA hoped that through peer-to-peer resolution, they could maintain the highest degree of professional conduct. Through the years, additional NATCA-FAA joint initiatives were added under the Foundations of Professionalism umbrella including Fully Charged, Turn Off Tune In, the Air Traffic Safety Action Program (ATSAP), Partnership for Safety, and Right From the Start. In 2018, NATCA and FAA are highlighting the newest addition to the Foundations of Professionalism program: the Respect initiative.

As part of this initiative, NATCA and the Agency are com-