

Assessment of Unmanned Aerial Systems Programs in Collegiate Aviation

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ABSTRACT

Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), or drones as they are commonly referred to, have experienced tremendous growth over the past several years. Their capabilities and technology have penetrated many aspects of the modern world. They are being used for everything from emergency response and agricultural research, to entrepreneur businesses and package deliveries. Experienced aviators and amateurs alike are being tapped as operators. At present the Federal Aviation Administration estimates there will be 1.3 million certified UAS pilots by the year 2020 (FAA, 2016). Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), which has the biggest membership of any association in the aviation industry, has recently added a new line of membership for drone pilots (Moore, 2017). New regulations (14 CFR Part 107) have also been created, by the FAA, to adopt specific rules for the operation of small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) in the National Airspace System (NAS) (FAA, 2016). Because of this growth, the authors of this paper, examine collegiate aviation programs and their curriculums to better understand how aviation education is evolving and educating students for this ever changing and dynamic new industry.

Keywords: Collegiate Aviation, UAS, 14 CFR Part 107, Drone