

Analyzing the effects of “The Airline Safety and FAA Extension Act of 2010” on collegiate aviation programs

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On February 12, 2009, Colgan Air Flight 3407 a Bombardier DHC-8-400 crashed during approach into Buffalo, New York. Causal factors into the crash resulted in a strong lobbying group that pushed for regulatory changes in the requirements to become a pilot under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 121 operations. As a result, Congress passed the Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2010 (PL 111-216) which mandated that all pilots in part 121 operations hold an ATP Certificate. This law also required the FAA to revise the ATP Certificate requirements and include a provision that permitted the Administrator to allow specific academic training courses to be credited towards the minimum aeronautical experience requirements for an ATP Certificate. Consequently, the FAA created part 61.160, Aeronautical Experience – Airplane Category Restricted Privileges, which enables a pilot to obtain an ATP Certificate with reduced total time based on academic experience, under certain situations. Institutions of higher education could then apply and obtain authority to certify students who graduate from the institution’s degree program with an aviation major and meet the new requirements. The total flight time requirements for a restricted privileges ATP Certificate based on a degree with an aviation major could then be 1,000 hours for a graduate who holds a bachelor’s degree with an aviation major and meets the remaining requirements of 61.160(b) (Administration, 2013). This paper examines five institutions and the complications they faced because of this new regulation.

Keywords: Collegiate Aviation, Restricted ATP Certificate, Part 121, Colgan Air