

STUDY BOOST

Boeing signs up with Flight Group to back top student award

Boeing has agreed to sponsor the engineering student of the year award for at least another three years. The company signed the sponsorship deal with representatives of the Flight Group yesterday at the show.

The competition was run for the first time as part of the inaugural Flight International Aviation Excellence Awards earlier this year at the Singapore airshow. It aims to recognise and reward the engineering student who makes the biggest contribution to aerospace each year.

John Tracy, vice-president Engineering and Mission Assurance with Boeing Integrated Defence Systems, says: "We think we can build on the momentum and recognition that was created by the first award and make this really an industry standard."

"We intend for engineering students throughout the world to get excited about the prestige of winning this award. It raises the awareness of aerospace as a tremendous career opportunity for the best students in the world."

The next award will be presented at the Paris

airshow in 2007. It is open to anyone studying on a full-time or part-time engineering course, either at graduate or post-graduate level. Entrants will be asked to submit an application outlining what they have done to contribute to aerospace. This could take the form of a paper they have written, a patent they have lodged or research they have conducted. Applications will be accepted from early 2007.

Cyclical

"I think in the past our industry has been cyclical," Tracy says. "However consolidation and incorporating defence provision has minimised this. Business is ramping up and it's much less cyclical now."

"People stopped going into engineering in general, a lot of people went into business, a lot of people went into the dot-com area... but the industry is growing strongly now, very strongly, and we need to attract that talent again."

In his role, which includes overseeing IDS's 32,000-strong engineering team, Tracy understands the demographic challenges that the engineering field needs to overcome.



From left: Warren McEwan – Flight sales manager N.America – Mary C. Foerster – vice president business support Boeing and Richard Thiele – head of sales, Flight.

First award: James Gregory

The winner of the inaugural Boeing Engineering Student of the Year award was James Gregory. His work covered the development of pressure-sensitive paint for use in unsteady aerodynamics; and the piezo-fluidic actuator for use in thrust-vectoring. Gregory is a graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology and Purdue University, Indiana. He completed the research work as a post-doctoral student at the US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

"We're a fairly mature company, and most aircraft companies have the same situation, where a fairly significant fraction of their engineering team is eligible to retire. Significant numbers are eligible to retire today and over the next 5-10 years. It can be up to 30% of their engineering team in some aerospace companies," Tracy says.

Boeing runs a variety of programmes with high school and university students to showcase aero-

space careers including an intern programme which has given 450 US students the chance to undertake work experience at the company this summer.

Resource

"We're interested in making sure that this very important resource is coming along to fill these gaps and that's why we have that interest and why we do a variety of things to encourage young people to go into aerospace engineering. It requires the

students to select a technical path from a fairly early age and our job is to encourage them to do that," he says.

Tracy is not alone in pointing to an engineering skills shortage. Cutbacks in recruitment and training mean that throughout the industry the engineering age profile is on average increasing, and the booming industry desperately wants to reassert its position as a first-choice destination for graduates.

"There's an enduring need for talent to enter our workforce. The next generation of engineers that we're trying to encourage to come into aerospace really are the future of not only our company but of all aerospace companies."

"If we hope to see the kind of advancement in the next hundred years that we saw in the last hundred years, we have to do everything we can to encourage the best and the brightest to join the profession."

Executives on move up at Parker

California-based Parker Aerospace has made a number of executive level promotions.

John Meston has been named group vice-president of the company's Fluid Management and Control Systems Branch while Carl Moffitt is the new vice-president and general manager of its Control Systems Division. Greg Crowe is the new general manager of Parker Aerospace's Air and Fuel Division; Cindi Little has been made general manager of Parker Aerospace's Nichols Airborne Division; and Greg Bierlein has been appointed general manager of Parker Aerospace's Hydraulic Systems. Jeff Rolf is the new group marketing director, Europe.

The company, a subsidiary of Parker Hannifin, manufactures hydraulic, fuel and pneumatic systems components.

Figures paint healthy picture of UK industry

The number and variety of British-based companies on display at Farnborough is a testament to the health of the aerospace industry in the UK.

The country has the second-largest aerospace industry in the world with a turnover in excess of £18 billion (\$33 billion), divided evenly between civil and defence contracts. The industry employs 123,000 people; 30,000 of these work in maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO). Another 150,000 are employed indirectly in the aerospace industry supply chain.

Aerospace is one of the UK's major export sectors, gener-

ating a trade surplus of more than £2.5 billion. It is also a centre for Research and Development. In particular, expertise in aerodynamics means the UK plays a leading role in wing, engine, weapon and rotor design. This has helped UK companies secure major supply contracts for projects such as the Airbus A380, Boeing 787 and F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

Latest statistics from 2004 show skilled trades account for 27%, the largest proportion of those employed in aerospace in the UK. Other significant proportions are managers (11%); professionals (16%);

associate professionals (10%); admin/clerical (9%); machine operatives (15%) and elementary staff (11%). Sales and customer service staff account for only 1% of total staff numbers.

Approximately 19% of UK aerospace workers have a degree or equivalent, with only 5% having no qualification; 43% are qualified to A-level or equivalent, and 15% have completed higher education other than a degree.

More than two-thirds of employees work for the largest 5% of companies (companies employing more than 500 people). Only 5% of aerospace

workers are employed by companies with fewer than 50 employees.

The industry's largest concentrations are in the North-West, East Midlands and South-West of England. However Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are also important contributors to UK aerospace.

Although increasing, the proportion of women working in the industry is still only 11%. Approximately 2% of UK aerospace workers are from visible ethnic minorities. Among aerospace workers, 7% are aged 16-24; 49% are 25-44 years and 45% are 45 years or older.