

**Report of the Review Team
for
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Reauthorization to Offer Degree Programs in Maine**

Overview:

Name: Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Street Address: 600 South Clyde Morris Blvd
City: Daytona Beach
State/Zip Code: FL 32114-3900

On the heels of the rise of the aeronautical industry in the mid-1920s, the Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Institute emerged to offer training for pilots and support staff for this new field. At first closely allied with the commercial industry, Embry-Riddle was poised to answer the demand for trained pilots and mechanics created by the outbreak of World War II. A variety of different regional centers were consolidated in 1965 into a central campus in Daytona Beach, FL. In 1970, Embry-Riddle changed its name to Embry-Riddle University, signaling its new role in embedding its technical programs within a broader, higher-education context. The University received initial accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in 1968 and now offers more than 30 programs at the associate's, the bachelor's and the master's level. Though still closely allied with military operations in many locations, ERAU also offers programs to a wider civilian population, and now has more than 34,000 students at 130 teaching sites and online in the United States and overseas.

ERAU began offering courses in Maine in 1981, and moved in 1994 from the Limestone Air Base to the Brunswick Naval Air Station. In the wake of heightened security concerns following 9/11, and anticipating a potential move off site from the Naval Air Station, the University sought and received authorization as an out-of-state institution to offer degree programs in the State of Maine in 2004.

The Brunswick Regional Center of the University was visited on December 18, 2008 by a Review Team consisting of Dr. Thomas Edwards, Vice President for Academic Affairs at

Thomas College (Team Chair); Dr. Christopher Quinn, President of Andover College; and Lora Downing, Career and Technical Education Specialist with the Maine Department of Education. Non-voting members of the Team included Philip Dionne, Observer, Maine State Board of Education and Harry Osgood, Higher Education Specialist with the Maine Department of Education.

In preparation for the site visit, the team reviewed a report in support of Embry-Riddle's application to continue to offer academic degree credit courses and programs in Maine. In the course of a site visit on December 18, 2008, the team met with Embry-Riddle representatives and students. Based on the report and the results of that visit, the team requested follow-up materials to assist in drafting their report. A second on-visit was conducted by the Team on May 8, 2009. The Team's report of findings follows.

A. Operating Authorization and Accreditation

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University was originally accredited in 1968 by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools headquartered in Decatur, GA. The University was last reviewed in 2002 and continued in accreditation with the next review scheduled for 2012. The accreditation for ERAU extends to the main campus in Daytona Beach, FL and all extended sites, including the center in Brunswick. The University awards degrees at the associate, the bachelor, and the master's level. All academic programs in Brunswick are covered in this accreditation. The corporation is headquartered and licensed in the State of Florida.

This standard is met.

B. Organization and Governance

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University is a highly centralized organization, with policies and curriculum disseminated from the central office in Florida and delivered at the regional centers. The governance structure for the university as outlined in the *Bylaws* is headed by a Board of

Trustees and the University President, along with executive vice-presidents for the residential campuses in Florida and Arizona and the Worldwide operations. The extended educational sites are administered through regional directors (Dean Bernard Cordial for the Eastern Region) and the local center directors of operations (for the Brunswick Center, Director of Academic Support Charles Whitten and Associate Director of Academic Support Rob Webster). Policies and procedures for many operations related to the regional centers and for the University in general are outlined in ERAU's *Extended Campus Procedures and Operations Manual*.

The regional centers deliver programs and services as determined at the main campus. Faculty credentials, course syllabi, and admissions information are all reviewed by the central administration. Regional centers exercise a limited degree of autonomy focused on advising students, scheduling and staffing courses, and providing for faculty overview. Fiscal administration of the regional centers is also overseen by the central office through the regional administration. ERAU has a common *Worldwide Campus Catalog* which outlines academic programs offered, academic regulations, and student services for the entire university. The *Catalog* lists officers of the University, faculty, academic administrators, and members of the Board of Trustees.

The standard is met.

C. Institutional Objectives

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University states that its mission is “to provide the highest quality education, training, and student services to aviation and aerospace professionals worldwide” (*Catalog*, 12). The purpose of the University is detailed in the *Catalog*, with a focus on career training in the fields of aviation, aerospace, engineering and related fields” (*Catalog*, 7).

This special emphasis is clearly represented through the University's structure, location, and program offerings. The history of the development of the university's offerings, the delivery method and scheduling of courses, and the transferability of courses within the University have all been designed to cater to the specific needs of a student population closely identified with the

U.S. military and support personnel. The highly centralized format regarding course descriptions, faculty credentials, admissions policies and program delivery are compatible with an academic mission focused on highly structured and sequenced technical programs for a specific student population.

The announced closure of the Brunswick Naval Air Station, however, has introduced no slight degree of uncertainty about this current model and the focus of ongoing operations at the Brunswick site. With an anticipated drawdown of military personnel in the area, ERAU's operations in Brunswick face the prospect of planning for a significant transition to servicing a student body that may be predominately civilian in the not-too-distant future.

The team identified that the regional center and the administration are aware of this shift, and that many options exist for adapting the kinds of programs that ERAU offers to a different market within Maine. The team did note, however, a lack of clarity and specificity about the status of future plans for the ongoing operations of the Brunswick Center and this potential shift to a different student population.

The standard is met.

D. Financial Resources

As a branch campus, the Brunswick campus is dependent on the broader resource pool of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. ERAU clearly documents that it has the financial resources to support the Maine program. It is unclear if the Brunswick location is solvent, particularly in light of the major looming change with the closing of the base necessitating a relocation of the campus. Leased facilities may represent a significant new operating expense. The team did not review a *pro forma* income statement indicating how the Brunswick campus will operate with this imminent change. These facts give the team concern that the continuity of the Maine operations faces a significant degree of uncertainty.

The team recommends that a letter of financial commitment from ERAU to support the continuing operations that is acceptable to the Maine Board of Education will allow the campus to meet the standard.

The standard is met. [*Contingent upon Board acceptance of an ERAU letter of commitment to on-going operations in the State of Maine – see Review Team Recommendations at the end of this report.*]

E. Admission Requirements

The admission requirements for ERAU are outlined in the *2008-2010 Worldwide Catalog* (pages 15-19) with criteria outlined for undergraduate, graduate, transfer and international students. Graduate admissions requirements are to some extent program-specific (such as those outlined for the MBAA, the Master of Business Administration in Aviation). Students may access the admissions process online. Applicants who meet the admission criteria may apply for admission and concurrently enroll for up to 12 credits while their application for admission is being processed.

Undergraduate admission requires either a high school diploma or GED or the equivalent of training or military experience as recommended by the American Council on Education (ACE). First-time graduate students must possess a bachelor's degree with a cumulative G.P.A. of 2.5 or higher. There are options available for conditional admission and students seeking coursework for professional development.

ERAU's refund policies are outlined in the *2008-2010 Worldwide Catalog* on page 134, detailing the refund schedule for students who withdraw prior to and during the semester.

The standard is met.

F. Academic Programs

The Embry Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) programs offered at the Brunswick campus share in the ERAU worldwide offerings. The degree programs provide a comprehensive education, preparing students for productive careers and responsible citizenship in the areas of aviation, aerospace, management and related fields.

The ERAU *Worldwide Campus Catalog* gives a general description of ERAU Worldwide campus and provides detailed information regarding the departments within the institution and curricula offered by ERAU. The requirements for associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, and master's degrees are clearly outlined in the ERAU brochures and the ERAU *Worldwide Catalog*. Course work is available at the Brunswick campus and online with campus support.

The Brunswick campus currently has access to the facilities and equipment provided at Naval Air Station Brunswick to support programs. The visiting committee was provided a listing of current resource titles. It was not clear what provisions were being made for facilities, equipment and resource materials once the base is closed.

To date the target population has been those persons located at Naval Air Station Brunswick. As the closing date of the base approaches the current target population will no longer exist. The administrators at the ERAU Brunswick campus have projected that the future enrollment will be from the general population. Current enrollment reports and projections were provided to the visiting committee.

The process for the evaluation of programs and instruction is outlined in Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Academic Policies and Procedures, Academic Oversight of Curriculum EC-A-30.

As part of an extended campus network where primary responsibility for course design, requirements and objectives rests with the central campus, programs offered at any of the ERAU

worldwide campuses are required to carry the same academic quality, course objectives, course requirements and instructional support as those at the main campus.

The visiting committee raised concerns about the course offerings, facilities, and access to equipment and resources as ERAU transitions to a different student population and potentially a different campus setting.

This standard is met.

G. Library and Learning Resources

The Brunswick campus of ERAU maintains a small on-site collection (<100 volumes) in its Riddle Aviation Collection. These materials appear to support the highly technical aviation programs offered by the campus.

These local holdings are augmented by comprehensive access to the main ERAU Hunt Library located in Daytona Beach, FL. Dedicated library support is available to all distance students, including those in Brunswick.

The Hunt library also provides remote electronic access to appropriate databases and periodical indices. Adequate training materials and resources are supplied to allow Brunswick students the opportunity to efficiently access all available materials.

The team suggests that the Brunswick campus investigate local consortium and partnership opportunities to enhance student access to library and other information resources in Maine.

The Standard is met.

H. Degree Requirements

All degree requirements are listed in the current ERAU *Worldwide Campus Catalog*.

ERAU Brunswick Campus offers the following programs:

Degree	Credit hours	Requirements
AS Aviation Maintenance	60 credit hours	Combines either a background or course work in aviation maintenance.
BS Aviation Maintenance	120 credit hours	Students who enter the program holding an FAA Airframe and Powerplant Certificate are awarded 30 credit hours toward their degree. Students specialize in one of two maintenance functions; Management or Safety. The experienced aviation maintenance technician gains a comprehensive business foundation.
AS Professional Aeronautics	60 credit hours	Combines either a background or course work in aviation and aeronautics with a well-rounded general academic education.
BS Professional Aeronautics	120 credit hours	Conceived and developed specifically for people who work or have worked in aviation careers; curriculum designed to build upon aviation knowledge and skills students bring with them from training and experience. Combines a student's aviation learning, the required and elective courses in Aeronautical Science, Business, Computer Science, Economics, Communication, Humanities, Social Science, Mathematics, Physical Science, along with professional development.
AS Technical Management	60 credit hours	Combines either a background or course work in technical field of study.
BS Technical Management	120 credit hours	Designed for the student who possesses technical expertise either through previous course work, licensing or experience. Provides the student a flexible, yet solid, business program. The three Bachelor of Science in Technical Management degrees that specialize in Engineering Sciences, Logistics or Occupational Safety and Health also require 120 credit hours.
Master of Aeronautical Science	36 credit hours	Entry requires possession of an undergraduate foundation in the areas of college-level mathematics, introduction to

		computers, economics and behavioral science. There are eight specializations from which the student may choose: Aeronautics, Aviation/Aerospace Education Technology, Aviation/Aerospace Management, Aviation/Aerospace Operations, Aviation/Aerospace Safety Systems, Human Factors in Aviation Systems, Space Studies, and Space Operations Management. (Not all specializations are offered at all campus locations.) Successful completion includes 12 credit hours in Advanced Aviation/Aerospace Science, 12 credit hours that make up the specialization chosen, and 12 credit hours to include electives and either a thesis or a Graduate Capstone Project. The program is designed to provide the aviation/aerospace professional enhancement of their knowledge and the ability to pursue additional career opportunities.
MS Technical Management	36 credit hours	Successful completion includes 24 credit hours in the Management Core and 12 credit hours that make up the specialization chosen, to include a Graduate Capstone Project.

The standard is met.

I. Faculty

The faculty members of ERAU Brunswick campus are selected based on their academic credentials and professional experience and must meet the same standards as all other faculty members throughout the University. The Regional Dean and ERAU Worldwide Office are responsible for reviewing all faculty members who teach at the Brunswick campus, assuring that individuals meet the centrally-defined standard for teaching specific courses.

All faculty members teaching at the ERAU Brunswick campus are part-time appointees and members of the ERAU Worldwide Campus faculty and are appointed by the Chancellor of the ERAU Worldwide Campus. The ERAU Brunswick campus employs approximately twenty-one (21) faculty members who are evaluated by the local Director of Academics at least once each year under the guidelines of University policy and procedures. The evaluations are kept in the faculty member's personnel file at the ERAU Brunswick campus. These evaluations are used to foster a process of professional growth and development and to provide evidence for decisions involving retention, compensation, promotions, and tenure. The Review Team was provided with a list of faculty members, courses taught, and highest degree earned.

The standard is met.

J. Facilities

The current facilities are available to ERAU Brunswick campus through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ERAU and the Brunswick Naval Air Station. The facilities are adequate to meet the needs of the current student enrollment.

As described in section D, the access to these facilities under the MOU will be terminated by the imminent closure of the Naval Air Station. ERAU has not currently confirmed arrangements as part of a formal redevelopment plan of the Naval Air Station after the base closes. The level of research and planning for contracting for appropriate facilities in the state of Maine to assure continuity of its operations is unclear. As such, while the current facilities meet the standard, planning and securing new space to serve the current students should be a priority. The team recommends that the aforementioned letter of commitment by ERAU to the Maine Board of Education should address a plan and include a financial commitment to securing appropriate facilities for the continuity of operations.

The standard is met. [Contingent upon receipt of the aforementioned ERAU letter of commitment].

K. Student Services

The ERAU *Academic Policies and Procedures Manual* states that all students will be assigned an academic advisor at the time of the student's initial matriculation to assist with the selection and scheduling of an academic program. Students are able to access academic advising at the ERAU Brunswick campus through the local Director of Academic Support and the Associate Director of Academic Support. The local staff provides information related to financial aid, library services, and career services. Students are provided one-on-one academic counseling to determine academic program choices and provide students with course recommendations.

The ERAU Brunswick campus provides career services to alumni either seeking employment opportunities or seeking ERAU candidates to fill positions within their own companies through their online system:

- **EagleTRAK**, an online resume referral database, to find current position listings, receive email communication from degree-specific program managers, and stay connected to Career Services.
- **EaglesNEST**, a database that allows alumni to stay in touch.

The visiting committee raised concerns about the type and the extent of the student services being offered that may extend beyond academic advising, especially in light of the fact that the current level of services to students may need to change as ERAU Brunswick transitions to a different student population.

This standard is met.

L. Telecommunication Instruction

ERAU indicates in its application that it has recently adopted the software platform EagleVision as an “interactive, collaborative virtual classroom and web center” that provides an interface with Blackboard, a standard course management software used by many colleges and universities for delivering online courses (30). Asynchronous discussion forums traditionally hosted in

Blackboard can be supplemented with virtual classroom web conferencing as well as Voice over IP (VoIP) audio conferencing. Students can access library resources online and all students are provided with an ERAU email account. Interviews with students indicated general satisfaction with the technological aspects of course delivery with ERAU.

The standard is met.

General/Non-Discrimination Policy

A non-discrimination policy is located on page 3 of the *2008-2010 Worldwide Catalog*. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is found on page 126, and information regarding services for students with disabilities is on page 130 of the same catalog.

Review Team Recommendations to the Maine State Board of Education:

Given the level of uncertainty about the long-range strategic planning for on-going operations at or near the current Brunswick site, the Review Team has several recommendations to make to the Board. First, the Team recommends that Embry Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) forward a letter to Commissioner Susan A. Gendron, no later than July 30, 2009, confirming the institution's intent to maintain a physical presence in Maine sufficient to meet the needs of students currently enrolled in ERAU programs. With this letter of assurance, the Review Team recommends approval of the request from ERAU to continue to provide academic credit course offerings in Maine to June 30, 2011. The team also recommends that ERAU submit an Interim Report to the State Board by June 30, 2011; the specific areas to be addressed follow. With the State Board's approval of the Interim Report the Team recommends that Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's authorization period be extended to June 30, 2013.

It is recommended that the Interim Report update the Board regarding the status of ERAU operations at or near the Brunswick site with specific emphasis being placed upon addressing the following areas:

C. Institutional Objectives, especially as it relates to the status of strategic planning for the on-going delivery of academic programs to a potentially different student population given the anticipated changes in the Brunswick community and the status of the Brunswick Naval Air Station.

D. Financial Resources, especially as it pertains to the financial growth projections contained in the current application and to the role of the local center staff in the budgetary process and strategic planning. The Interim Report should provide more clarity and documentation related to the breakdown of financial and enrollment data (e.g., matriculated versus non-matriculated students, full-time versus part-time, enrollments by program) and identify the basis for ERAU's financial projections for growth at the Brunswick site.

J. Facilities, to include a thorough description of the facilities available to ERAU at that point in terms of classroom space, teaching and learning facilities, and technological resources available to students, faculty and staff. Whether that space is on or off the current military base, the Interim Report should document that the facilities are sufficient to meet the learning needs of ERAU students.

K. Student Services, to include more clarity and documentation about the ability of the local center to identify and address the comprehensive student service needs of a learner population that has the potential to present a much wider range of challenges than the current model which focuses predominately upon a student population drawn from members of the military, their dependents and spouses.