

UCCI to offer aviation courses

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The University College of the Cayman Islands and management in the local aviation industry have teamed up to provide an educational programme to develop air transport management.

While UCCI will design the course, this is being done in consultation with local aviation stakeholders and experts.

At a press conference held at UCCI Monday morning it was outlined that there is a need to provide locally the necessary knowledge skills and qualifications to afford current and future Caymanians, and other Caribbean nationals, the opportunity to manage and influence aviation.



At the signing of the MOU at UCCI on Monday were, front row, from left: Acting President UCCI Brian Chapell; Frank Flowers of Flowers Air Dispatch Services; UCCI's Director of Graduate Studies and Executive Training Carolyn Mathews. Back row, from left: Acting Director of Tourism Shomari Scott; Director General of the Civil Aviation Authority Richard Smith; Director of Commercial Affairs Regulation & Administration Civil Aviation Authority Nicoela (Nikki) McCoy; CEO of the Cayman Islands Airports Authority Jeremy Jackson; Island Air and UCCI's Edward Jerrard; Marcus Cumber of Island Air.

Acting President UCCI Dr. Brian Chapell, speaking about the relationship between UCCI and aviation stakeholders, said: "Everybody sees the need to improve the overall human capital strength in the field of aviation. I think a lot of people in the room see it as a business opportunity to really advance the aviation industry on the island and I think that our involvement with it as the premier tertiary institution on the island is critical in making sure that this goes forward."

Dr. Carolyn Mathews, Director of Graduate Studies and Executive Training at UCCI, said the partners in the aviation industry have so far told them what is needed for the course and UCCI are now putting together an introductory programme, to be developed in consultation with the stakeholders.

Mr. Chapell said there's no question that the university needs to draw on

the expertise of the industry.

“It’s rare that you get that much buy in from all the stakeholders at such an early stage,” he said.

UCCI and the aviation partners have developed a Memorandum of Understanding to show that all agencies have the same agenda and all agencies are on board for promoting the aviation industry in the Cayman Islands.

Those who signed the MOU on Monday included: Mr. Chapell of UCCI, Jeremy Jackson CEO of the Cayman Islands Airports Authority, Richard Smith, Director-General of the Civil Aviation Authority, Frank Flowers of Flowers Air Dispatch Services, Marcus Cumber of Island Air and Shomari Scott, Acting Director of the Department of Tourism. Those not present but also to be involved in the MOU are: Cayman Airways, The Cayman Islands Tourism Association and Air Agencies.

Mr. Chapell said, “There’s clear opportunity to develop the industry, there’s clear opportunity for business development, there’s clear opportunity for UCCI to develop a new training programme and there’s clear opportunity for everyone in this room and their agencies to be involved in that training and in strengthening the workforce.”

Ms Mathews noted that the MOU document is not legally binding. “The status of this document is that it’s a handshake,” she said.

At UCCI they are now working on getting the programme together.

“We’re piloting of course, the first time. So as soon as we run it the first time we ask participants to evaluate the programme so we can make changes,” she said.

She said they will be looking at how the programme slots into an Associate’s Degree, how it slots into a Bachelors Degree and how it slots into an MBA.

“So there are tremendous opportunities here and flexibility to use this programme to meet your needs, but for the participants to make sure they get credit and to move on to where the career path is that they wish to fulfil.”

UCCI is looking at starting the pilot course from the first week in July this summer. The idea initially will be for middle/senior management within the industry to participate in the pilot so they can get the proper feedback necessary to amend the course and adjust it for various levels of training such as a higher level and medium level for those already working in the industry and a lower level for school leavers.

The first programme will be an entry level programme on Fundamentals of Air Transport Management and will initially be a three day course.

Edward Jerrard of Island Air, who also does some part-time teaching at

UCCI, said the original first course in July will be three days in order to gain the necessary feedback from those in the industry and they can then judge what specific courses they need to run and how long they will make the courses.

He thanked everyone who had helped put the MOU together. "It's all very nice coming up with the idea of running air transport management courses at the university but without the support of the key players on this island then the whole thing is really not as effective as it could be."

He said they would like to see the Cayman Islands become an island of aviation experts.

Mr. Chapell gave full credit for the idea to Mr. Jerrard and to the Director of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Cayman Islands Richard Smith.

"The thing that really stood out for me were things like Richard saying he had sent employees to Singapore for training and how expensive it is to do that, to send somebody half way around the world for a training course because that was only space that was available.

"I looked at that as an opportunity for UCCI to get involved. I looked at that as a business opportunity for us where we could have a regional presence and an opportunity for people who are in places that are anywhere not close to Singapore to come here and pursue that same level of training. We're very much looking forward to making that a priority at UCCI and to have that international and regional presence and recognition."