

What If? Affordable college credits (Revised)



Bill O'Brien

What if I told you that I found a university, not a college, but a university, that would give you 72 college credits for your FAA Airframe and Powerplant Certificate even if your certificate was issued in 1950?

What if I told you that the 72 credits could be applied toward a 84 credit hour, Associate of Applied Science Degree in aviation maintenance technology?

What if I told you that the remaining 12 credits could be taken via the Internet right at home or work?

What if I told you that you could finish the 12 credits (four courses) and earn the degree in less than a year by taking six credits (two courses) per semester?

What if I told you that the cost for the four, three-credit hour courses would set you back less than \$500 for tuition and fees? No, that is not a typo. The tuition and fees for four courses at a nationally

recognized university is less than \$500. This tuition price does not include textbooks.

What if I told you that the university may give you credit for college level courses you may have taken over the years? So instead of taking the required four courses, you might wind up taking only one or two courses depending on the university's evaluation of your official transcripts from your previous college level courses.

Have I given you enough "What ifs?" OK, the school we are talking about is Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell (ENMU-R). Yeah, that's the same town the flying saucer was supposed to have crashed nearby back in 1947. Do yourself a favor and try to get past the ET on a bicycle thing and Hollywood hype for a minute, and listen to me. On Oct. 3, 2002, I went to the ENMU-Roswell campus unannounced, on my own time and coin, to check out this "too good to be true" offer. I met with Jim Primm who is the chair of the aviation programs. I found out that ENMU-R, in addition to providing a



The Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell (ENMU-R) aviation facility and staff, left to right: David Partain, Karen Cain, Mike Montoya, Jim Primm, Lynn Crouch, Jerry DeLosh, and Terry Guerrero.

degree program in aviation maintenance technology, runs the only Part 147 A&P school in New Mexico. The university is also the only Part 147 school teaching a Cessna Citation approved course in composite repairs. So we are talking about getting a degree from a professionally run, aviation focused, nationally accredited university.

About now I know you've got some questions. Let me see if I can answer the majority of them.

Question: Why are the courses so inexpensive, if the school is so good? The courses cost less because the university charges out-of-state students the same \$39.90 tuition/fee per credit hour rate as it charges a New Mexico resident, who lives outside of Roswell campus district. The one restriction to get these rates is the student must only carry six credit hours or less per semester.

Question: Do I have to travel to New Mexico? While New Mexico is a beautiful state, the answer is no.

Everything can be done on the Web. However, you might want to go to the graduation ceremony in order to be part of the pomp and ceremony and to receive your sheepskin, but pomp and ceremony is not mandatory.

Question: What kind of courses must I take? The number of courses you must take are four:

UNIV 101 Freshman Seminar (How to research, use libraries, etc.) - 3 credits

ENG 102 English Composition - 3 credits

COMM 101 Interpersonal Communications - 3 credits

MATH 107 Intermediate Algebra - 3 credits

Don't let the Intermediate Algebra requirement scare you like it did me in high school. If you can work weight and balance on aircraft then you already are working with algebra.

Question: Can I use the Associate of Applied Science Degree toward a four-year degree? Yes, ENMU-R is fully accredited and its credits and degrees are accepted for transfer everywhere.

Question: How many semesters are there a year at ENMU-R? There are two semesters and a summer session. The Spring semester starts in January, Summer session starts in June, and Fall semester starts in August.

Question: How can I make this happen? There are five things you have to do.

(a) First, get off your rump and pull up the ENMU-Roswell web site at www.roswell.enmu.edu and check it out for yourself. If you decide to register, and you can do it on this web site, make sure that you declare that you want an Associate of Applied Science Degree and your area of interest is aviation maintenance technology. In about five working days you should be able to enroll; just check the web site to see if it's a go by enrolling. If you have limited experience with web classes, I recommend starting with the Freshman Seminar or Interpersonal Communication because prior testing is not required for either class. Then call the bookstore at (800) 243-6687, Ext. 192 to order your books.

(b) Next if you have earned any college courses or taken other technical courses that college credits have been assigned, have the college or university send your Official Transcripts to ENMU-R Office of Admissions, P.O. Box 6000, Roswell, NM 88202-6000.

(c) Send via the US mail a notarized *copy*, not the original, but a copy (both sides) of your FAA Mechanic's Certificate with Airframe and Powerplant rating to the ENMU-R Office of Admissions. You can mail a Xerox copy to the address above or you can fax it to the Admissions office at (505) 624-7144. Along with the copy of your A&P don't forget to include a short letter which should tell them who you are, what degree you have chosen. Tell them that the college transcripts, if any, are on the way, and include your correct mailing address because sometimes the address on your FAA mechanic's certificate and where you live now are different. Also include your home and work telephone number, and E-mail address, so these folks at ENMU-R can marry up your A&P certificate with your on-line registration form and start a file on you.

(d) After your application paper work is done, you *may* have to take a test. The name of the test is the ACCUPLACER basic skills test. The test will determine where you stand in English, math, and reading. If it's been awhile since you cracked a book, and depending on how well you do on the test, you might have to take a remedial class or two at the same \$39.90 per credit hour tuition to bring yourself up to the university's required level of skill. But don't sweat the ACCUPLACER test results, study an online practice test first and just do the best you can. I flunked the FAA sensitivity training twice, and I had to take four remedial "be nice to people" classes. On the other hand, the ACCUPLACER skills test may not be required if your college transcripts reflect a passing grade in basic skills areas, or if you have 30 college credit hours, which includes college level English and math or if you have ACT scores within the last five years of 19 or better, in English, math, or reading. The ACCUPLACER test can be taken free of charge, at ENMU-R, or the test can be proctored at your local college, high school, or library. If the test is proctored there may be a fee. To get more information call ENMU-R Testing Services at (800) 243-6687, Ext. 227/183 for your individual evaluation.

(e) ENMU-R has another important requirement. You have to show professional development in the field of aviation. This means as a professional mechanic you must show that you are constantly updating your skills and knowledge in your profession. ENMU-R will accept its own course in composite training or, if you obtained or renewed an IA, DME, DMIR, or earned a FAA Aviation Maintenance Technician Award of six hours of recurrent training or higher in the last calendar year as proof of professional development.

After you check out the school's web site, you should be able to answer all the who, what, when, where, why, and how questions dealing with the degree, cost, time, individual courses, and application process. If you have additional "What if" questions contact Cheryl Archuleta via e-mail at cheryl.archuleta@roswell.enmu.edu.

In summary, ENMU-R, Primm, and his associates should be congratulated for putting together an outstanding opportunity for A&P mechanics to further their educational needs. As an A&P, I strongly recommend that you take advantage of this exceptional opportunity as soon as possible. For I have found that in my 38 years in the aviation business that many "what if" opportunities that came my way became "might have been" regrets, all because I was too busy, too lazy, or too scared to act. If earning a college degree has been your long-time dream, then get a move on. The ball is in your court, don't drop it.

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Bachelor degree (BAAS) is now available online through the ENMU educational system.