

Lifelong Lessons

“Leaders are not born but are made over a lifetime of learning.”

This was the sentiment of John P. Kotter of Harvard Business School, who captured the importance of education—it’s not limited to classroom time but is a lifelong pursuit of knowledge.



Likewise, for airline pilots, while the value of classroom experience cannot be overestimated, neither can the teaching that occurs when professional pilots volunteer as mentors for those with less experience. And just as important is the spirit of relentless learning that must both characterize and captivate our industry if we are to keep airlines economically strong and passengers and cargo safe.

In this issue of *Air Line Pilot*, you will read how ALPA’s experience has taught our union to accept no limit to our learning as we endeavor to achieve the highest possible standards for current and future airline pilots as well as continually raising the bar on the safest and most secure air transportation system on the globe.

Every day, our union is leading by example in its commitment to education and the pursuit of perfection in the profession. We are drawing on the lessons we have learned over eight decades to build the airline piloting profession for the future.

Given that many new airline pilots now enter the profession from postsecondary aviation programs rather than from the military, ALPA’s Education Committee volunteers are reaching out to universities to shape curricula and heading into classrooms to mentor student pilots.

ALPA volunteers from many of our pilot groups are also visiting elementary and high schools and engaging in other community events to inspire and educate younger students and cultivate their love of flying.

In the much broader view, ALPA continues to foster a culture of learning across the airline industry. We must gain from every experience if we are to move forward in achieving our labor relations, safety, and security goals.

In collective bargaining, ALPA is refining new approaches and employing time-tested strategies to negotiate stronger contracts with improved pay and benefits for pilots today as well as career progression and job security for our members tomorrow. With ALPA’s steadfast determination, these gains will continue to raise the standards for airline pilots in the future.

In our relentless pursuit of safety, we have learned from modern science what it will take to ensure that airline pilots are adequately rested to perform their jobs. This month, that

education formed the foundation for ALPA’s bringing together representatives from government agencies, airlines, and aviation labor groups to explore how best to implement the FAA’s new pilot fatigue rules when they go into effect on Jan. 4, 2014.

The more than 200 individuals in attendance reflected and reinforced the collaborative process that, from past experience, we knew would be essential and that has brought our industry to this promising point. Learning from this same science also makes it clear that all airline pilots suffer the effects of fatigue equally. As a result, all pilots must be equally protected by the

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new fatigue regulations to ensure they arrive at work fit for duty, so our work to include cargo pilots in the new fatigue rule continues.

In this same spirit of continual education, ALPA is gratified to note that lessons learned come in all forms. The NTSB appears to be resuming its historical commitment to learning everything possible from an accident investigation *before* suggesting conclusions about the cause.

Similarly, the United Arab Emirates’ (UAE) General Civil Aviation Authority’s investigation of UPS Flight 6 was a testament to tenacity in finding all the factors that contributed to an accident that resulted in the tragic loss of our pilot colleagues aboard. Because of the UAE’s thoroughness, the safety threat posed by lithium battery shipments has come into focus yet again. Perhaps this time, policy makers will learn the lesson, harmonize with International Civil Aviation Organization guidance, and act to bring lithium batteries under dangerous goods regulations, as ALPA has advocated for so many years.

And the UAE’s investigatory work highlights again that our argument over international competition issues is not with the UAE, or their state-sponsored airlines Etihad and Emirates. Instead, our charge is to change U.S. government policy to level the playing field and allow our airlines to compete in the international marketplace.

That the word “educate” has its roots in the Latin verb “ducere,” which means “to lead,” is no coincidence. Whether through our committee on education or our work in accident investigation, government advocacy, or collective bargaining, ALPA is leading the airline industry in what must be a lifetime commitment to learning.

Capt. Lee Moak, ALPA President