



November 21, 2016

NAVAIR School of Modeling and Simulation Master's Degree Graduates Celebrate Momentous Achievements



NAVAIR University, College of Test and Evaluation, School of M&S graduates, Old Dominion Faculty, distinguished guests, and NAVAIR leadership gather after the graduation ceremony Oct. 27 at Patuxent River, Maryland.

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. - The NAVAIR University College of Test and Evaluation, School of Modeling and Simulation, in partnership with Old Dominion University, celebrated the first students to receive their Master of Engineering (ME) degree in modeling and simulation (M&S).

Thirteen students were recognized for completing the master's degree, along with 12 students who completed a graduate-level certificate at a graduation ceremony Oct. 27 at the River's Edge Conference Center here.

NAVAIR partnered with Old Dominion University to provide professional education and development for NAVAIR civilians to improve their expertise in modeling and simulation. This unique program offers NAVAIR employees the opportunity to earn a graduate certificate in M&S by finishing four advanced degree-level courses. Upon completion, they are eligible to take an additional six classes to obtain an ME in modeling and simulation. The courses are accelerated and designed to run full-time for one week, giving students the ability to complete either the graduate certificate or master's program in just one year.



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Several distinguished guests attended the event including Rear Adm. Randy Mahr, deputy program executive officer and deputy program director at the F-35 Lightning II Joint Program Office. Also in attendance was Amy Markowich, dean of the School of Modeling and Simulation, and Department of the Navy Modeling and Simulation executive, Dennis Reed, deputy dean of the School of Modeling and Simulation, Dr. Robert Wojtowicz, dean of the graduate school at Old Dominion University, and Dr. Rick Mckenzie, chair of Modeling, Simulation & Visualization Engineering at Old Dominion University.

Mahr and Markowich both expressed gratitude to the students for taking time out of their busy lives to develop necessary M&S skills to better support the warfighter. Additionally, Mahr acknowledged the key roles that families play in supporting the students, remarking from his own past experience that he fully appreciates the hard work and sacrifice that it takes to get through a rigorous program such as this.

"This M&S education is important for NAVAIR employees to be able to drive the development and testing of the Navy's aircraft and weapon systems," said Mahr. "Modeling and simulation enables us to thoroughly test our advanced capabilities and deliver on the promise that we've made to the warfighter -- to provide systems that work as expected, every time."

Mahr urged the students to fully utilize M&S and said, "This is what will bring our men and women home safely for holidays like Thanksgiving. It's all of you that will be doing this critical work."

Markowich echoed those sentiments and added, "With such advanced systems, we simply can't test every facet in the air any more. M&S is a critical component of our national asset test and evaluation (T&E) capabilities. It's no longer a 'nice to have.' Now M&S and live, virtual, constructive (LVC) testing are 'must-haves'. You are taking an important step in advancing T&E to the next level."

The two programs were developed to train employees over the long haul and to give them a broader knowledge and perspective of the application of M&S and its importance to the development of NAVAIR warfighting capabilities.

"This program is critical to develop the pipeline for a well-trained Department of the Navy workforce, ensuring that they have the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities to develop innovative solutions to support warfighter needs and perform capabilities-based T&E," said Markowich.

While the program is strenuous and compresses challenging course content in a short



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amount of time, students universally agreed that these opportunities are worth the effort. They said they appreciated the chance to continue with more master's degree classes in this structure, and they recognize the direct benefit to their career and to the command.

Andrew Rhoten, a flight test engineer explained, "Of the numerous opportunities I've had the pleasure of participating in, the ODU M&S program is one of the most beneficial to the NAVAIR and Department of Defense programs I support. The skills and critical-thinking mentality cultivated through the program serve to develop a more capable workforce and speed the delivery of capabilities to the fleet."

Mahr specifically mentioned the need for the logistics community to also take advantage of this opportunity to grow the use of M&S in this key area.

The next session for the M&S certificate program will begin in January 2017. More information can be found on the NAVAIR University website: navairu.navair.navy.mil.