

Partnerships Promote Educational Attainment and Workforce Readiness

Los Angeles County is home to dozens of corporations that depend on a workforce that possesses strong STEM skills, and TAM has partnered with many of those corporations to introduce its students to the viable jobs they can prepare for now. This direct, hands-on connection to their futures inspires TAM students to graduate from high school, attend and complete college, and – in the process – accept opportunities to develop strong leadership and communication skills.

TAM and SpaceX: Establishing a Career Pipeline

In 2013, after several years of effective collaboration, TAM and SpaceX launched a Commercial Space Academy for high school students. Seven students (four of whom are girls) are currently enrolled in the Academy, and their curriculum, which includes flight training, is designed to prepare them to realize their dreams of becoming SpaceX Astronauts. This influx of new and enthusiastic human resources fills a need for SpaceX. Already an employer of 3,000 individuals at its Hawthorne location, the aerospace industry leader has a backlog of commercial and defense orders, and so it relies on TAM to help identify its future workforce as it transitions from design to production.

SpaceX is but one of the local aerospace companies that recognizes TAM's capacity to inspire and train for careers in the industry. Boeing, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and Northrop Grumman also have been active partners to TAM. The partnership with Northrop Grumman is particularly robust, with TAM students annually being placed in internships that make them eligible to receive a scholarship to attend the EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association) Summer Aviation Academy that takes place in Wisconsin every August.

TAM and the National Girls Collaborative Project: Filling a Gap

In 2014, TAM became a member program of the National Girls Collaborative Project (NGCP), an initiative funded by the National Science Foundation. Since 2002, NGCP has convened organizations throughout the United States to build on members' commitment to informing and encouraging girls to pursue careers in the STEM disciplines. In 39 states, 31 geographic "collaboratives" offer more than 3,000 programs that reach 8.3 million girls and 4.8 million boys.

A recent assessment of NGCP collaboratives revealed a significant gap in aviation and aerospace-related awareness and programming, and TAM is one of only a dozen air and space museums that participates in NGCP. Among a national network of hundreds of air and space museums, NGCP recognizes TAM's unique model as an informal education program. In November 2014, that model will be the focus of a live webinar featuring TAM Founder Robin Petgrave, a TAM student, and an industry partner. Recorded and made available on NGCP's website and announced in advance to more than 50,000 individuals who subscribe to NGCP's monthly newsletter and other notices, the webinar will explore ways by which girls can become engaged in aviation and aerospace.

Tomorrow's Aeronautical Museum: where the sky is not the limit.