

ARLYNN MCMAHON

Mentoring the Mentors

A national mentoring program aimed specifically at aviation educators provides support, leadership, and professional development to new and experienced instructors. The much-anticipated program is the brain-child of the Society of Aviation and Flight Educators (SAFE) and is managed by the SAFE Mentoring Governing Committee.

The program matches expert aviation educators with those seeking assistance or improvement to become world-class educators themselves. “We are very excited about the program,” said Donna Wilt, Chair of the Mentoring Governing Committee, adding, “The program was developed with input from members who participated in a needs-survey last year.” The program is available to current educators or educators-in-training who are members of SAFE, whether in flight, ground, youth, college, maintenance, or other aviation areas. Even experienced educators occasionally need new insights in new aircraft, or with new technologies

and techniques. With this support, participants grow smarter in ways to promote a safer training environment.

A Solid Start

In addition to the Governing Committee, the mentoring program has already approved several expert mentors and has paired them with instructors looking for guidance with a variety of aviation and teaching issues. Matching is based on items such as similar professional areas in aviation, experience in a particular aircraft, needed teaching or particular technical expertise, geographical location and more. A unique aspect of the program is that three suitable mentors are recommended to the mentee. The mentee makes the final selection with whom he or she thinks will best suit his or her needs. The goal is low-stress coaching for advanced professional development.

“We tap into the combined experience of a unique membership which includes some of the industry’s top aviation educators, including local and national General Aviation Award winners in the flight instructor, aviation maintenance, avionics, and FAA Safety Team categories,” notes SAFE’s Chief Mentor Arlynn McMahon. She adds, “A few of our mentors contributed to the FAA’s Best Mentoring Practices – that’s a huge resource. I hope that the mentoring program will become an industry asset as we learn from each other how to raise professionalism in instruction.”

To learn more about the SAFE Mentoring Program, visit www.safepilots.org/programs/safe-initiatives/mentoring-program or contact Dr. Donna Wilt, Chairman, SAFE Mentoring Governing Committee at dfwilt@gmail.com, or Ms. Arlynn McMahon, Chief Mentor at arlynn@aerotech.net.



Photo by Susan Parson

Arlynn McMahon is SAFE’s chief mentor and the 2009 National CFI of the Year.