SkillsUSA State Competition – Pensacola, FL. April 29-30, 2013

Karen Candiani
Assistant Professor; Director, Charlotte Aerospace Institute

I am proud to report that six out of our seven SkillsUSA Region VI medalists won medals at the State competition. These results prove that our program is preparing our young men and women for professional and cultural leadership in a complex and changing world.

Professor Stephen Nowell and I accompanied our Regional winners to the SkillsUSA State Skill and Leadership Competition. Three students competed in Aviation Maintenance Technology and four students competed in Leadership Skills. The Leadership Skill competitions were held at the Pensacola Civic Center. The Aviation Maintenance competition was hosted by L-3 Communications and took place in their maintenance hangar at Naval Air Station Pensacola across from the Blue Angel Maintenance hangar. Yes, we could see the F/A-18 Hornets and Fat Albert on the ramp! The L-3 employees were great and treated the students as peers. There were aircraft everywhere, on the ramp, in the hangar and in the air. What an experience for these students.

When the students were not competing, they visited the National Naval Aviation Museum on the base; truly a must-see for any aviator. And if this wasn’t enough, while on the base we were visited by AD1 Aviation Maintenance Mate First Class James Cunningham, who is a mechanic for the Blue Angels and an alumni of Port Charlotte High School.

James showed us around the Blue Angel facility and took us on the ramp to view the Blue Angel F/A-18 Hornets. Our visit finished with a tour inside the C-130 Fat Albert, affectionately called “Bert”. It doesn’t get any better than this!

The Charlotte Technical Center has been competing in SkillsUSA for many years. This is only the second year that the aviation program has participated in SkillsUSA; we took two Regional medalists to the State competition in 2012 and took seven Regional medalists this year; I expect we will have more next year. This year, the CTC took a total of 52 students to compete with over 2,000 career and technical education students from across the state of Florida. Overall, we came home with a total of 32 medals, 10 Gold, 9 Silver and 13 Bronze. We are very excited that these 10 gold medalists are now eligible to represent Florida at the National Skills USA Championship in Kansas City, Missouri in June, and that one of them is representing Aviation Maintenance Technology.

The Charlotte Aerospace Institute (CAI) at the Charlotte Technical Center is a partnership between Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) and Charlotte County Public Schools (CCPS) and is designed to enhance a student’s future success.

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA helps each student excel.

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