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Liberty University

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## **Future focus: School of Aeronautics joins forces with School of Engineering for expansion projects**

December 01, 2009 | Carmen P. Fleischauer

Liberty University's School of Aeronautics (SOA) and School of Engineering and Computational Sciences (SECS) have recently formed a partnership due to rapid growth in both programs.

After the decision to collaborate, Gen. David Young, dean of the School of Aeronautics, and Dr. Ron Sones, dean of the School of Engineering and Computational Sciences, began a joint building campaign this year.

"We agreed to join forces with the primary reason to raise both of these facilities from the ground," Sones said. "Since then, it's blossomed in that we are seeing areas for academic collaboration between the schools as well. One of the first will be in welding."

The School of Aeronautics facility, to be located at the Lynchburg Regional Airport, will allow the SOA to utilize a secondary runway not frequently used by the airport and help prepare superior aviators to enter careers in the U.S. Armed Forces, commercial aviation and missionary aviation.

This state-of-the-art training and administrative center will provide additional classroom space with flight operation, maintenance and hangar facilities for training fixed wing and helicopter pilots, aeronautical engineers, air traffic controllers and aviation mechanics.

According to Young, “The development of the facility will give us the capacity to grow to somewhere between 500 and 1,000 students.”

Liberty’s School of Aeronautics is the largest flight school in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the second largest faith-based university level flight school in the U.S. It is also the only faith-based aviation school to offer helicopter training and is one of only three universities in the U.S. to offer both airplane and helicopter training.

The School of Engineering’s new facilities will be located adjacent to Campus East and include research and teaching labs, classrooms, offices, technology libraries and study areas.

“With these buildings we will be able ... to expand our current student body of just under 500 students to a significantly greater number,” said Sones.

The facilities, each designed to appear in the shape of a cross from an aerial view, will allow for future growth in instruction and research in the areas of aeronautical, mechanical and intelligence-related engineering.

Business executives, government officials and university administrators met in September to learn about the SOA and SECS partnership and each program’s needs. Young and Sones shared the vision of their respective schools.

As the university continues to grow, the addition of research and technical degrees are rounding out the academic programs, they said, truly making Liberty University the top Christian university in the nation.

Chancellor Jerry Falwell, Jr. discussed the growth of Liberty and how enhanced academic programs further the school’s goals to improve the quality of programs and facilities.

“These schools are taking us beyond what a liberal arts college usually offers ... to research and technical training that we’ve never had before, and we’re excited about it,” Falwell said.

*For information about the SOA and the SECS, visit [www.liberty.edu/aviation](http://www.liberty.edu/aviation) and [www.liberty.edu/engineering](http://www.liberty.edu/engineering).*