



# Faculty Advisor Handbook for AAAE Student Chapters

[aaae.org/academic](http://aaae.org/academic)

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## PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

The Academic Relations Committee (ARC) of the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) is dedicated to strengthening the relationship between AAAE—the world's largest professional organization for airport executives—its six (6) Regional Chapters, and AAAE Academic Members and Student Chapters. The ARC's mission includes cultivating intern and co-op programs; promoting educational and networking opportunities for aviation management students; and supporting the creation, growth, and sustainability of AAAE Student Chapters.

This AAAE Faculty Advisor Handbook is designed to support faculty advisors in mentoring and guiding their AAAE Student Chapters as recognized on-campus student organizations. It provides best practices for achieving the ARC's mission while also serving as a valuable resource for faculty advising students pursuing airport management careers. In addition to chapter mentorship, this handbook offers a broad range of airport-related resources for faculty teaching subjects such as airport operations, administration, finance, and planning.

### **Why This Handbook?**

Many faculty advisors benefit from learning from the experiences of seasoned advisors and industry professionals, whether you are supporting an existing chapter, revitalizing an inactive chapter, or establishing a new or affiliate chapter.

This handbook provides guidance, tools, and resources to help strengthen student engagement with AAAE and the airport industry. Through literature, videos, expert contacts, guest speakers, and industry insights, faculty advisors can enrich both student chapters and classroom learning, offering students greater exposure to career opportunities in airport management.

Additionally, this handbook complements the AAAE Student Chapter Resource Manual, which provides detailed guidance on forming and administering a student chapter. While this document focuses on AAAE's national structure, it also acknowledges the specific policies and procedures of individual academic institutions.

We hope you find this handbook to be a valuable resource in advising and mentoring your AAAE Student Chapter. Thank you for your commitment to fostering the next generation of airport professionals.

*-AAAЕ Academic Relations Committee*

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## ABOUT AAAE

The American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) is the largest professional organization for airport professionals in the world, representing thousands of airport management personnel at public use airports nationwide. AAAE's primary goal is to assist airport professionals in fulfilling their responsibilities to the airports and communities they serve.

AAAE membership is truly representative of airport management throughout the country. It places equal emphasis on large and small airport concerns, reflecting a membership comprised of professionals from large, medium and small hub airports, as well as hundreds of managers from non-hub airports used exclusively by general aviation or commuter airlines.

AAAE was founded in 1928 to represent airport management throughout the United States. Each year since its founding, AAAE has held an annual meeting to bring airport managers together to discuss the latest problems and issues facing the industry. In 1954, the annual conference expanded to include exhibitors of airport services, products and equipment.

One of the most important events for AAAE was the formal adoption of a professional standards accreditation program in 1954. AAAE sponsors this professional Accreditation Program for airport professionals, who are Affiliate Members of AAAE. The professional membership requirements consist of a comprehensive written test, writing requirement, and an oral examination on a level comparable to other professional certifications. Upon successful completion of these requirements, the Accredited Airport Executive is admitted to the membership as an Executive Member and may use the initials A.A.E. after his/her name.

Since its inception in 1928, AAAE has continued to move forward and grow, not only in membership size but also in expertise. As the premier association of airport professionals in the world, AAAE has a voice that is heard in the industry and in government, which supports and develops the professional airport executive.

## About the Academic Relations Committee (ARC)

The mission of the ARC is to strengthen the relationship between regional AAAE Chapters and the AAAE Student Chapters within their respective geographic areas, to cultivate intern and co-op programs, and to develop new student chapters.

The ARC is made up of AAAE members representing a cross section of the aviation community, including airport management, aviation consultants, and members of the academic community. In the course of carrying out its mission, the ARC plans a full student agenda at the AAAE Annual Conference to help introduce student chapters and academic members to subjects that will help guide them in successfully entering a career in airports and aviation.

## AAAE STUDENT CHAPTER ADMINISTRATION

### The AAAE Student Chapter

In 1983, AAAE established a student chapter program for universities offering airport management and aviation-related degrees. Students participating in a student chapter as Academic Members are provided basically the same information and services as other members. The objectives of the student chapter program are:

1. To promote professional development and instill professional attitudes in students engaged in the study of airport development, administration, management and operation or in aviation-related fields.

2. To develop understanding on the part of the student that professional airport management embodies technical ability, integrity, responsibility, purpose and a desire to contribute to the strengthening of the profession.
3. To further the purposes and programs of AAE as expressed in the Constitution and Bylaws of the American Association of Airport Executives.

## AAAE Student Chapter - Charter and Organization

For more than 30 years, AAE has successfully sponsored student chapters at colleges and universities across the United States. Each academic institution has unique policies and guidelines governing student organizations, but AAE Student Chapters are generally recognized as professional organizations affiliated with the aviation industry. Most AAE Student Chapters are chartered as co-curricular activities that support airport management career interests and often complement aviation degree programs.

To be officially recognized as a university-affiliated club or organization, a AAE Student Chapter must typically submit an initial application that includes:

- **AAAE Student Chapter Petition Confirmation Letter** – Provided by a faculty advisor who is an AAE member.
- **Recognition Letter** – Issued by the dean or other authorized school official confirming support for the chapter.
- **Constitution & Bylaws** – A formal document outlining the chapter's governance, aligned with university policies.
- **Annual Report** – Includes a list of current officers and a designated faculty advisor.

Annual renewal of the chapter's status is required, and faculty advisors should review their institution's specific policies for student organizations. Advisors should also ensure that student members understand and comply with all university requirements to keep the chapter in good standing.

Each AAE Student Chapter must draft a constitution that meets university policies while maintaining the core requirements of the AAE Student Chapter program. While the AAE Student Chapter Resource Manual provides sample bylaws, schools may require modifications. It is important to compare the university's requirements with AAE's standards to resolve any inconsistencies. Before finalizing chapter bylaws, consultation with the AAE Academic Relations staff liaison is strongly recommended to ensure compliance and alignment with AAE expectations.

Some universities limit the number of student organizations representing similar industry interests, making it challenging for students to establish multiple aviation-related clubs. In such cases, schools have successfully created umbrella organizations that represent multiple aviation groups (e.g., Collegiate Aviation Business Executives, Collegiate Aviation Industry Professionals, Airport Management Club, etc.). These umbrella organizations allow students to engage with AAE while also maintaining affiliations with other aviation-related professional groups.

Each AAE Student Chapter should determine the organizational structure that best fits student interests while complying with university policies. AAE is generally flexible regarding chapter bylaws, but faculty advisors and student leaders are encouraged to consult with the AAE ARC staff liaison before finalizing any governing documents.

## Alliance Student Chapter

Forming a AAAE Alliance Student Chapter offers an alternative pathway for students at smaller colleges or two-year institutions with airport or aviation management programs to establish a student chapter and enjoy AAAE membership benefits. This initiative allows students from these schools to: form partnerships with each other or with a larger, established AAAE Student Chapter at a nearby university; gain access to networking, professional development, and mentorship opportunities within AAAE; and participate in chapter activities even if their institution cannot yet sustain an independent AAAE Student Chapter.

The process for forming an AAAE Alliance Student Chapter is outlined in the AAAE Student Chapter Resource Manual. This initiative is designed to complement, not replace, independent student chapters. It provides an alternative path for schools that may not yet have the resources to support a standalone chapter, while maintaining the integrity of existing independent chapters.

For more details on forming an AAAE Alliance Student Chapter, faculty advisors and student leaders should refer to the AAAE Student Chapter Resource Manual or contact the AAAE ARC staff liaison.

## Chapter Liaisons

Each AAAE Student Chapter is assigned a liaison to serve as a direct connection between the chapter and AAAE staff, helping to facilitate chapter administration and engagement with the broader AAAE network.

The chapter liaison is an experienced airport industry professional with a strong network of colleagues and access to valuable resources. Their primary responsibilities include supporting the Faculty Advisor; connecting the Chapter to AAAE, ensuring students and faculty are aware of AAAE resources, programs, and opportunities; providing industry insights and mentorship; and assisting with airport visits, guest speakers, networking events, and career-building opportunities.

Chapter liaisons serve as a bridge between student chapters and the professional aviation community, helping students maximize their engagement with AAAE and advance their careers in airport management.

## Faculty Advisors

The faculty advisor plays a critical role in the success of an AAAE Student Chapter by providing guidance, mentorship, and support to student leaders. An engaged faculty advisor helps students develop leadership skills, learn organizational management, and navigate career opportunities in airport management.

To serve as a AAAE Student Chapter faculty advisor, the individual must maintain active membership with AAAE. In acknowledgment of that role, AAAE offers a reduced membership rate for faculty advisors. It is discounted to the same rate as an accredited airport executive. For membership information, the faculty advisor should contact the ARC staff liaison.

It is important that the faculty advisor be familiar with the AAAE Student Chapter Resource Manual, which provides essential rules and best practices for establishing and managing a student chapter. With a timely filing of the AAAE Student Chapter's Annual Report, which is due no later than February 28<sup>th</sup> of each year, the chapter qualifies for complimentary and discounted meeting registration fees. This includes one complimentary registration for the student chapter faculty advisor to attend the AAAE Annual Conference and Exposition. While responsibility for preparing and submitting the annual report falls on the student leadership, it is in the best interests of faculty advisors to monitor the process to ensure a timely submission.

## Student Chapter Planning and Administration

Successful planning and administration are essential to the long-term sustainability of an AAAE Student Chapter. Faculty advisors and student leaders should work together to ensure the chapter remains active, engaging, and aligned with AAAE's mission.

### ***Charter and Bylaws***

A strong set of bylaws provides consistency and structure for the chapter. These bylaws, once submitted and accepted by AAAE, should be followed closely. Faculty advisors should encourage student leaders to review and discuss the bylaws with chapter members at the start of each academic year to ensure continuity.

- Amendments – If changes are needed, bylaws should include clear procedures for amendments.
- Periodic Review – Chapters should periodically review their bylaws to ensure they remain relevant.
- Faculty Advisor's Role – While advisors should be involved in discussions, students should take ownership of bylaw updates. Well-crafted bylaws reduce confusion and streamline governance.

### ***AAAE Student Chapter Officers***

Serving as a chapter officer provides students with valuable leadership experience, enhances résumés, and prepares them for professional roles.

- Responsibilities & Expectations – Being an officer is both a privilege and a responsibility. Officers should take their roles seriously and commit to leading the chapter effectively.
- Faculty Advisor's Role – Faculty advisors should act as mentors and counselors, assisting in leadership transitions and providing guidance when needed.
- Membership Requirement – All chapter officers must be current AAAE Academic Members.

### ***Student Membership***

Faculty advisors play a key role in encouraging student participation by:

- ✓ Introducing students to the chapter through local membership and activities.
- ✓ Promoting AAAE Academic Membership as a pathway to greater involvement and career growth.
- ✓ Fostering sustainable membership levels by creating engaging opportunities for students.

A strong student chapter thrives when there is a steady pipeline of new members and emerging leaders.

### ***Succession Planning***

One of the biggest challenges for any student chapter is maintaining continuity. Faculty advisors serve as a consistent presence across academic years and play a key role in ensuring a smooth transition between student leadership teams.

- Maintain Chapter Records – Faculty advisors should keep key records, including bylaws and governance documents; website and account passwords; financial statements and reports;

meeting agendas and minutes; guest speaker and field trip contacts; annual reports and membership lists.

- Encourage Leadership Development – Faculty advisors should help identify and mentor promising students who can take on leadership roles.
- Senior Members Mentoring Juniors – Encouraging experienced members to mentor younger students helps build a pipeline of future leaders.

### ***Chapter Mission and Vision Statement***

A well-defined mission and vision statement provides a clear sense of purpose and long-term direction for the chapter.

- Mission Statement – Defines why the chapter exists and what it aims to accomplish.
- Vision Statement – Outlines a long-term perspective on what the chapter aspires to become.

Faculty advisors can guide student leaders in crafting meaningful and actionable mission and vision statements.

### ***Chapter Goals and Objectives***

A strong chapter sets clear, attainable goals with specific action plans.

#### **Short-Term Goals (Academic Year)**

Each academic year, the chapter should focus on tangible, achievable goals, such as:

- Recruiting new members
- Fundraising activities
- Organizing tours and site visits
- Hosting guest speakers
- Establishing a Certified Member (C.M.) study group
- Attending the AAAE Annual Conference

Each goal should have specific objectives with clear timelines, responsibilities, and resource needs.

#### **Long-Term Goals (Five-Year Plan)**

More ambitious long-term goals help shape the chapter's legacy and ensure its continued growth.

Examples include:

- Expanding membership and campus presence
- Strengthening ties with AAAE Regional Chapters
- Increasing engagement with local airport executives
- Positioning the chapter as a leading student organization on campus

While students may be focused on short-term academic demands, chapter leaders should work with faculty advisors to establish a vision that extends beyond their tenure.

## **Chapter Activities**

### ***Membership Recruitment and Retention***



Building and maintaining a strong AAAE Student Chapter requires a proactive approach to recruitment and retention. Engaging first- and second-year aviation students early—without requiring immediate AAAE Academic Membership—allows them to explore the benefits of involvement in an aviation-oriented professional network. Over time, these students can become more engaged, leading to sustained membership growth and a vibrant chapter.

Some ideas for consideration for promoting new membership include:

- Addressing an incoming freshman class to explain the benefits of becoming involved in the student chapter.
- Use posters, brochures, and promotional materials in high-traffic student areas.
- Engage with students at university-sponsored organization fairs and events.
- Creating a promotional brochure (AAAE has a customizable flyer available to chapters).
- Leverage social media to promote vents, meetings, and success stories to generate interest and engagement.

Recruiting younger students broadens their understanding of the aviation industry beyond just flying, exposing them to airport management and other aviation career paths. Encouraging early involvement creates a pipeline of future AAAE Academic Members and sustained recruitment efforts lead to consistent chapter membership growth. Chapters should strive to engage students over multiple years to build a thriving and sustainable organization.

### ***Meetings***

Chapter officers and returning member students should be strongly encouraged to be present at the first meeting of each semester to welcome new students. Offer incentives such as pizza, snacks, and drinks (some pizza chains offer student discounts). Be flexible with scheduling – experiment with different meeting days and times to find the best balance. After the first meeting, gather member input to determine an ideal meeting schedule that maximizes participation.

Having an occasional guest speaker from local airports and aviation businesses can greatly enhance meetings. Use virtual options (Zoom, Teams, etc.) to bring in guest speakers when in-person visits aren't feasible. The AAAE staff liaison can also help to find speakers and maintain a student speakers bureau on [www.aaae.org/academic](http://www.aaae.org/academic).

Faculty advisors should meet with the student chapter officers periodically in executive sessions to plan and schedule speaking topics, brainstorm potential chapter social and service events, and to discuss organization leadership.

### ***Tours and Travel Visits***

An excellent way to build enthusiasm within the chapter membership is to arrange tours and visits to airports and/or aviation-related businesses. In most cases, tours beyond the immediate area tend to be more exciting, both for the student chapter and for the host, particularly if neither has had much previous interaction. Depending on the distance required to travel for these activities, participation may vary.

Developing a short list of potential tours should be done early in the fall semester. Alumni, industry contacts, and in some cases cold calls, can be useful in identifying potential tour opportunities. While not a limiting factor, tours that are closely aligned with the chapter's interests (i.e., airport management, planning and development, etc.) should be primary considerations. However, major air shows, airline

headquarters, maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities, and air cargo operations are also good candidates for a visit. Each of these will reveal a sample set of challenges encountered by airport management professionals.

Tours should be planned well ahead of time to allow sufficient time to plan logistics and to coordinate host schedules. Faculty advisors should check the school's policy guidelines, since some programs require insurance forms, waivers, or similar documentation to be completed before traveling. For all such events, students should be briefed on departure schedules, dress codes, and personal conduct prior to any visit.

### ***Fundraising***

Since student chapters often need financial support for **conferences, tours, and activities**, fundraising is essential. The faculty advisor's role should be to encourage the student chapter officers to plan such fundraising events well in advance. The goals and objectives for the fundraising activity should be defined clearly. For example, attending the AAAE Annual Conference and Exposition will require substantial funds for travel, hotel, food and other costs. If the goal is for the student chapter to subsidize members who wish to attend, it should be made clear that fundraising events will contribute to that goal, even if some students will not be attending. Along those lines, some measure of fairness and equity should be considered to reward students who actively participate in fundraising events as opposed to students who rarely show up.

Use diverse fundraising strategies including food service events (fly-in breakfast, chili cook-offs, spaghetti dinners) at local airports, bake sales, and distributing sample products are just a few fund raisers that have been successfully used by chapters in the past. Contributions, donations, and sponsorships from local aviation enterprises also can be solicited. Garage sales can be effective fundraisers as well, but students should be directed to check local ordinances and laws to ensure compliance.

If the goals and objectives of the fund-raising event have been clearly defined, it will make the decision easier when choosing what type of activity likely will provide the best rate of return for the effort. In all cases, secure control of cash proceeds should be carefully monitored.

### ***Service Projects***

Engaging in service projects provides AAAE Student Chapter members with a sense of purpose beyond their academic and professional pursuits. These activities not only benefit the community but also help students develop leadership skills, expand professional networks, and enhance résumés.

In addition, service projects can result in the establishment of valuable and lasting relationships and in finding additional opportunities for future chapter activities. Potential projects in aviation may be found with "Angel Flight" ([www.angelflight.com](http://www.angelflight.com)), "Honor Flight Network" ([www.honorflight.org](http://www.honorflight.org)), and "Challenge Air for Kids and Friends" ([www.challengeair.com](http://www.challengeair.com)). Chapters can also participate in general community service, such as food drives & disaster relief efforts; STEM outreach to local schools; park cleanups and sustainability projects.

Position service projects as résumé builders highlighting their value for professional growth. Chapters can create long-term partnerships by establishing annual traditions with local organizations. Integrate service projects into mission statements and leadership objectives to enhance student engagement, foster professional connections, and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

## EDUCATION AND CAREER RESOURCES

### Scholarships and Grants

Since 1989, the AAAE Foundation has issued more than 3,540 scholarships totaling more than \$6.83 million, making the organization one of the largest supporters of higher education assistance in the entire aviation industry. AAAE offers a variety of scholarships for aviation students at both the national level and through its six regional chapters. Faculty advisors should actively inform and encourage student chapter members to explore and apply for these valuable financial aid opportunities. For a full list of available scholarships and application details, visit [www.aaae.org/foundation](http://www.aaae.org/foundation).

### AAAE Regional Chapter Scholarships

Regional chapters of AAAE sponsor scholarships for their academic members. For more information on regional chapter scholarships:

- South Central AAAE Chapter <https://sccaaae.org/Scholarships>
- Great Lakes AAAE Chapter <https://www.glc-aaae.org/awards-scholarships>
- Northeast AAAE Chapter <https://www.necaaae.org/student-scholarships>
- Northwest AAAE Chapter <https://www.nwaaae.org/page/Scholarships>
- Southwest AAAE Chapter <https://www.swaaae.org/Scholarships>
- Southeast AAAE Chapter <http://www.secaaaae.org/education-scholarships.html>

### Internships

Internships are increasingly becoming a standard expectation for entry-level positions in airport management and aviation-related fields. While most internships are open to all applicants, faculty advisors play a crucial role in helping AAAE Student Chapter members stay informed about available opportunities. Encourage strategic internship pursuits:

- Prioritize Paid Internships – Employers who offer paid internships are more likely to assign meaningful, career-relevant work.
- Set Clear Learning Objectives – Students should prepare 5 to 10 specific learning goals before an interview to demonstrate focus and initiative to potential employers and establish mutual expectations between the intern and the employer. The AAAE Career Center is an excellent tool for finding open internships. Students should be encouraged to search listings regularly and follow application instructions carefully.

After completing an internship, students should be invited to speak at chapter meetings to share insights and experiences. Peer testimonials can be powerful motivators for other students considering internships.

Faculty advisors can connect with industry contacts at airports, FBOs, airlines, and charter operators to learn about internship openings. Encourage students to research opportunities on airport and aviation business websites. Serve as a mentor and coach, providing guidance, support, and encouragement throughout the internship search process.

For more information on internship opportunities, visit <https://careercenter.aaae.org>.

## Professional Development

AAAE offers students access to the same resources and programs available to its general membership, providing valuable opportunities for learning, networking, and professional growth.

### ***AAAE Training Programs (ANTN Digicast)***

Colleges and universities can subscribe to AAAE's ANTN Digicast at a discounted rate, providing full access to all students, including use in classroom settings. ANTN Digicast offers on-demand video training covering every aspect of airport operations, including maintenance, security, firefighting, customer service, human resources, and more.

This training platform helps airports meet federally mandated compliance requirements, educates aviation professionals on their complex work environment, and supports safe, efficient operations throughout the industry. Digicast is regularly updated with high-quality training programs, industry conference highlights, and breaking aviation news.

For more information on subscribing, visit <https://antndigicast.com>.

### ***Student Mentoring Program***

To help students benefit from the experience and insights of industry professionals, AAAE offers mentorship opportunities through its Mentor Match program, available within the AAAE Hub online community. This platform connects students with experienced airport executives who can provide career guidance, professional insights, and networking opportunities. AAAE mentors can support student chapters in various ways, including:

- Serving as guest lecturers at chapter meetings or classes.
- Offering career advice and industry insights.
- Acting as professional references (where appropriate).
- Providing subject matter expertise (SME) and resources on specific aviation topics.

For more information, visit <http://hub.aaae.org/mentoring> to explore available mentorship opportunities.

### ***Certified Member (C.M.) Examination***

The AAAE Certified Member (C.M.) program is a highly respected credential for individuals pursuing careers in airport management, professionals who interact with airport executives, and airport personnel looking to advance toward full A.A.E. accreditation. Candidates earn the C.M. designation by passing a comprehensive 180-question multiple-choice exam, which assesses their knowledge of key airport management topics. The exam, based on the C.M. Body of Knowledge modules, can be taken online or in-person.

C.M. candidates can prepare for the exam by:

- Studying the C.M. Body of Knowledge modules at their own pace.
- Joining or forming a study group with peers.
- Attending AAAE-sponsored C.M. preparation courses.

Academic members can participate in the C.M. program under certain conditions:

- Students must upgrade their membership to Academic Graduate status.

- Upon payment of a one-time testing fee, students gain access to electronic study modules.
- After passing the exam, students cannot use the C.M. credential until they submit proof of graduation to AAAE.
- To maintain the C.M. designation, members must stay active in AAAE.

Some collegiate aviation programs incorporate the C.M. examination into their curriculum as a capstone activity before graduation. This process serves as a comprehensive review of airport management coursework, provides a competitive edge for students applying to airport-related positions, and may fulfill an employer's work experience requirement, as some airports recognize the C.M. credential as an alternative to prior industry experience.

For more information on the Certified Member (C.M.) program, visit [www.aaae.org/cm](http://www.aaae.org/cm) or contact the AAAE Accreditation Staff at [accreditation@aaae.org](mailto:accreditation@aaae.org).

*Note: The C.M. Body of Knowledge modules can serve as a valuable reference for airport-related coursework. Faculty advisors or students can contact AAAE for more information on how to incorporate these materials into their studies.*

### **Certification Programs**

AAAE offers a wide range of certification and professional development programs designed to support students, early-career professionals, and seasoned airport personnel alike. These programs provide specialized training, increase industry knowledge, and help candidates stand out in a competitive job market.

Academic Members are eligible to participate in many of these certification programs and are encouraged to pursue them as part of their professional growth. Faculty advisors should promote these opportunities to students and explore whether institutional scholarships or grants may be available to assist with program costs.

Available ACE certifications include:

**ACE Airfield Lighting Maintenance:** This program is designed to provide detailed electrical theory and proven maintenance techniques, while educating and challenging airport personnel with airfield lighting maintenance responsibilities, to improve the reliability of airport lighting and visual aid systems that are vital to aircraft safety on the airport surfaces.

**ACE Airfield Operations:** The Operations program is a Part 139-based curriculum designed to educate and challenge airport personnel with airfield operations responsibilities, or anyone interested in a related career.

**ACE Airport Finance:** ACE Finance is the first comprehensive program designed for airport personnel responsible for the financial operations at commercial service and general aviation airports. Airport Finance professionals will gain a better grasp on the airport system, the intricacies of airport management and operations and the relationship to the fiscal environment to help them strategically plan, budget and allocate funds.

**ACE Airport Security:** This is an extensive curriculum based on 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) – 1500 series: TSA Regulations and ICAO Annex 17. The program not only meets TSA 1542.3 requirements for Airport Security Coordinators (ASC) and alternate ASC's, but also builds upon the existing working security knowledge of aviation professionals.

**ACE Communications Center Operations:** An all-encompassing curriculum is tailored to address the unique operational techniques, challenges and responsibilities of the airport communication center dispatcher. It is based on a variety of techniques and recommendations from U.S. government agencies and leading industry communication organizations.

**ACE Law Enforcement Officer (LEO):** ACE LEO is distinguished by its focus on response protocols and real-world applications. The course provides training in a uniformed and concise manner to law enforcement and security personnel to competently and confidently do their jobs as well as meet the requirements of 49 CFR 1542.217.

**ACE Safety Management Systems (SMS):** This program is specifically designed for airport leadership and safety management personnel that work at the airport to improve airport safety and is based on upcoming FAA regulations regarding Safety Management.

**ACE Trusted Agent:** Designed to establish a general knowledge base for airport professionals working in the airport Credentialing Office, this program focuses on understanding the complexities that are continuously added to the requirements for vetting, issuing, tracking and auditing airport credentials and is based on Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations – 1542 series, and TSA Directives.

**ACE Planning & Environmental:** This program is designed for aviation professionals responsible for planning and environmental compliance at commercial service and general aviation airports. The certification is based on fundamental federal regulations and policies, research from aviation organizations and generally accepted planning and environmental practices. It explores the diverse components that make-up the airport, including airside and landside facilities, stakeholder participation, master planning, airport layout plan development, and environmental considerations.

Learn more: [www.aaae.org/ace](http://www.aaae.org/ace)

**Airport Security Coordinator (ASC) Certification:** The ASC Online Certification satisfies TSA 1542.3 requirements for Airport Security Coordinators and their alternates. This on-demand course can be completed in as little as two hours, providing essential tools and knowledge to manage airport security operations safely and effectively. Learn more at [www.aaae.org/asc](http://www.aaae.org/asc).

**Aircraft Rescue Firefighting (ARFF) Certifications:** In partnership with the Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting Working Group (ARFFWG), AAAE offers two professional designations through the ARFF Training Alliance:

- Airport Master Firefighter (A.M.F.)
- Airport Fire Officer (A.F.O.)

These self-paced programs support career development for ARFF personnel across all ranks, with a focus on operational and administrative knowledge. Learn more at [www.aaae.org/arff](http://www.aaae.org/arff).

**International Airport Certified Employee (IACE):** The IACE program is designed for airport personnel outside the U.S. and offers globally relevant training based on ICAO standards and international best practices. Ideal for aviation professionals at all career stages. Learn more at [www.aaae.org/iace](http://www.aaae.org/iace).

### ***Conferences and Seminars***

AAAE offers a wide range of educational conferences and seminars year-round, delivering industry-specific content for airport professionals at all career stages. These events provide critical training, exposure to cutting-edge trends, and invaluable networking opportunities—especially beneficial for students pursuing careers in airport management.

## ***AAAE ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION***

The AAAE Annual Conference and Exposition is the flagship event of the Association and a must-attend for students. Typically held in late spring or early summer, the conference attracts over 2,000 attendees, including representatives from airports of all sizes, consultants, engineers, architects, and industry service providers.

A dedicated student track—planned and hosted by the Academic Relations Committee—gives AAAE Academic Members full access to the conference and offers exclusive student programming, including:

- Student Career Exploration Fair: An informal job fair where students connect with airports and aviation companies. Networking and on-site interviews may be scheduled and opportunities to have resumes reviewed are available.
- Mentoring Sessions: One-on-one and small group mentoring sessions with AAAE industry leaders, helping students gain insight and build meaningful professional connections.
- Student/YoPro Social: A social mixer for students and members of AAAE's Young Professionals (YoPro) group, providing a relaxed environment to build peer networks.
- Networking Events: Students can attend the opening reception, host event, final banquet, and explore the exhibit hall, featuring the latest technologies, services, and innovations in airport management.

More information: [www.aaae.org/annual](http://www.aaae.org/annual).

## ***NATIONAL AIRPORTS CONFERENCE (NAC)***

The F. Russell Hoyt National Airports Conference (NAC), named in memory of Russ Hoyt, AAAE's first full-time executive director, focuses on airport operations, finance, and development. Held each fall (typically September/October), NAC features practical sessions on airport innovation and leadership, interactive panels and small group workshops, and opportunities to engage with decision-makers in airport management.

Discounted student registration is available, and AAAE Student Chapter benefit certificates may be applied toward attendance if they are not used for the Annual Conference.

Learn more at [www.aaae.org/nac](http://www.aaae.org/nac).

## ***SPECIALTY CONFERENCES***

AAAE hosts over 80 events annually, covering a wide array of airport-related disciplines. These include both in-person and virtual offerings on topics such as:

- Airport Operations, Safety, Planning, and Construction
- Finance, Legal, and Environmental Issues
- Customer Experience and General Aviation
- Security, Federal Affairs, and International Affairs
- Training and Certification for specialized roles

Academic Members and Faculty Advisors are welcome to attend, with discounted rates often available. Chapters may use discount certificates received as a member benefit. Browse the full event calendar at [www.aaae.org/upcomingevents](http://www.aaae.org/upcomingevents).

## AAAE Regional Chapters and International Affiliates

AAAE is supported by six (6) regional chapters across the United States, each serving the unique needs of airports and aviation professionals within their specific geographic areas. These regional chapters operate independently from the national organization, but are closely aligned through shared leadership, mission, and membership.

Each regional chapter maintains its own governance, hosts annual meetings, and often sponsors specialty conferences focused on timely topics in airport management. While membership in the national AAAE organization is encouraged, it is not required for participation in regional chapters. Most also offer student memberships, along with opportunities such as regional scholarships; internship and job openings; discounted rates for students attending regional events; and access to a local network of airport professionals.

Faculty advisors are encouraged to connect with their regional chapter and explore opportunities for collaboration. Building relationships at the regional level can lead to campus visits from airport professionals, guest lectures, internship placements, and career opportunities for students. A brief overview of each regional chapter is provided in Appendix A. More details are available at [www.aaae.org/about/chapters](http://www.aaae.org/about/chapters).

### IAAE and IAAE Canada

In addition to regional U.S. chapters, AAAE supports a global community of airport professionals through its international affiliates:

#### International Association of Airport Executives (IAAE)

The IAAE, a partnership between AAAE and international airport executives, promotes professional development and global collaboration among airport professionals worldwide. IAAE offers certification programs, global networking opportunities, and educational resources that align with AAAE's mission on an international scale. Learn more: [www.aaae.org/iaae](http://www.aaae.org/iaae).

#### International Association of Airport Executives Canada (IAAE Canada)

IAAE Canada is an autonomous professional organization affiliated with AAAE and dedicated to airport professionals in Canada. It offers its own Accredited Airport Executive (A.A.E.) program, educational initiatives, and events tailored to Canadian aviation standards and needs. Learn more: [www.iaaecanada.org](http://www.iaaecanada.org).

## Employment Opportunities

The AAAE Career Center is a robust, online job board featuring airport-related employment opportunities at all levels, many of which are ideal for students and recent graduates. Updated daily, listings often include nationally competitive internships and entry-level positions in airfield operations, planning, airport administration, and more.

All AAAE Academic Members have full access to the Career Center, which serves as an excellent tool for researching job openings, understanding industry trends, and preparing for career advancement. Faculty advisors are encouraged to utilize the Career Center as well, both to stay current with industry hiring practices and to guide students on how to strengthen their qualifications for specific roles. Reviewing job



descriptions and minimum requirements can provide insight into how students should position themselves for success.

For more information visit <https://careercenter.aaae.org>.

## Other Airport-Focused Academic Programs and Courses

Many students are introduced to airport management through a specific course or academic experience within their collegiate aviation program. While AAAE does not oversee academic curricula, we recognize the value of airport-centric coursework in preparing students for industry careers.

Faculty advisors are encouraged to reference existing airport-focused courses as potential additions or enhancements to their academic program, promote external airport-specific electives that may qualify for academic credit, and explore curriculum development ideas that align with industry trends and employer expectations. For a comprehensive listing of collegiate aviation programs offering airport-related coursework, visit the University Aviation Association (UAA) at [www.aaaero.org](http://www.aaaero.org).

Note: AAAE does not endorse specific programs or institutions but offers this information as a resource for academic planning and development.

## SUMMARY

Serving as a faculty advisor to a AAAE Student Chapter is a meaningful opportunity to mentor and inspire future leaders in airport management. While the role requires time, energy, and dedication, your efforts directly support not only your students, but also the aviation industry as a whole helping to ensure a pipeline of qualified, capable professionals ready to operate, manage, and advance the nation's airports.

Please remember you are not alone in this work. The Academic Relations Committee, AAAE staff, and local AAAE members are all here to support you. Whether you need information, connections, or resources, we're only an email or phone call away. Thank you for your service and commitment to the next generation of airport professionals!

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## APPENDIX A: AAAE REGIONAL CHAPTERS

AAAE maintains six affiliated regional chapters, which encompass the following geographic locations.

**Note:** The AAAE bylaws state that “a member of a Border State may designate the region which he or she will be deemed to represent.” The term “Border State” is defined as any state that falls within a AAAE region that is different from the region it falls under as defined by the Federal Aviation Administration. These states are marked with an asterisk.



States Represented: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia\*; the Canadian provinces of Quebec, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island; and the countries of Europe.

[www.necaaae.org](http://www.necaaae.org)



States Represented: Alabama, Arkansas\*, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky\*, Louisiana\*, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia\*, West Virginia\*; Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and the Caribbean; and the countries of South America.

[www.secaaae.org](http://www.secaaae.org)



States Represented: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas\*, Kentucky\*, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; and the Canadian provinces of Ontario, Manitoba and Nunavut. [www.glcaaae.org](http://www.glcaaae.org)



States Represented: Arkansas\*, Kansas\*, Louisiana\*, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas; and the countries of Central America, excluding the states of Baja California Norte, Baja California Sur and Sonora of the Republic of Mexico. [www.scaaae.org](http://www.scaaae.org)



States Represented: Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming; the Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Yukon and Northwest Territory; and the countries of Asia and the Middle East. [www.nwaaae.org](http://www.nwaaae.org)



States Represented: Arizona, California, Hawaii, and Nevada; and the Mexican states of Baja California Norte, Baja California Sur, Sonora of the Republic of Mexico; and the countries of Australia, New Zealand, and others located in the South Pacific. [www.swaaae.org](http://www.swaaae.org)

## APPENDIX B: PROFILES OF SUCCESSFUL CHAPTERS

Successful AAAE Student Chapters share common characteristics in organization, professional engagement, fundraising, and service. The following profiles outline practices that have helped chapters thrive and can serve as a model for new or growing chapters.

### Organization

Effective student chapters are built on structured leadership, shared responsibilities, and intentional member development. Leadership typically includes elected student officers, an engaged faculty advisor, and a chapter liaison, all working together to guide chapter direction and continuity. Key features of strong chapter organization include:

- Defined roles for officers, committee chairs, and subcommittee leads
- Mentorship of newer members by upperclassmen or returning officers
- Recognition of the faculty advisor's role as a coach, not just an administrator
- Committees focused on activities such as alumni outreach, fundraising, events, and marketing

A sustainable chapter model emphasizes succession planning, encouraging long-term engagement and leadership development.

### Professional Activities

Professional development is the core mission of every AAAE Student Chapter. Strong chapters regularly organize opportunities for members to engage with airport professionals and the aviation industry through:

- Guest speaker events hosted on campus or at local airports
- Field trips to commercial service and general aviation airports
- Participation in AAAE events, including:
  - The Annual Conference and Exposition
  - Regional chapter meetings
  - Specialty conferences relevant to member interests
- Workshops or study groups focused on industry certifications (e.g., C.M., ACE)

These activities build student confidence, improve industry knowledge, and foster connections that often lead to internships and employment.

### Fundraising and Sponsorships

Financial sustainability supports a chapter's ability to offer enriching experiences. Successful chapters pursue creative fundraising and cultivate sponsorships to support travel, events, and operations. Common and effective strategies include:

- Selling branded merchandise (e.g., t-shirts, tumblers, hats)
- Staffing booths at community or campus events for donations or fees
- Engaging with alumni and local businesses for sponsorships or in-kind support
- Requesting funds from student government or academic departments

Some chapters have even secured major sponsorships from local commercial service airports, though this is less common. Regardless of the source, effective fundraising builds team spirit, visibility, and financial independence.

## Service Activities

Community engagement is a hallmark of well-rounded student chapters. Service activities help develop leadership skills, boost chapter visibility, and create lasting bonds among members. Examples of impactful service initiatives include:

- Hosting aviation-themed events such as fly-ins, Aviation Day or Heritage Fairs, etc.
- Volunteering at local airports for clean-ups, static displays, or airshows
- Philanthropic efforts such as toy drives, food collections, or community education
- Aircraft washing as a fundraising or goodwill gesture

The benefits of service projects include increased member engagement, stronger alumni relations, and positive media exposure for the chapter and institution.