

## **TRIUMPHANT RETURN OF AAAE STUDENT CHAPTERS**

**By: Steve Adams, A.A.E. Chair, AAAE Academic Relations Committee**

This year's Annual AAAE Conference & Exhibition in Atlanta, Georgia saw the greatest turnout ever of our Student Chapter/Academic members. We were pleased to have 90+ students in attendance representing 15 AAAE Student Chapters. This was a great venue for these Student Chapter members to meet and greet, and learn about the activities taking place in those various chapters. Representatives from each gave a brief presentation at the Student Chapters meeting on Sunday morning.

These members had the opportunity to participate in a number of sessions planned by the AAAE Academic Relations Committee and geared specifically to them to help set the direction for their futures in aviation. A Career Exploration Panel made up of diverse members of the airport community led off these sessions. Sessions were also available on interview skills to help the participants land an airport job; as well as networking skills to make them more effective in communicating with not only participants at the Conference, but also in their future relationships in the industry. Members were also able to participate in an expanded student airfield tour hosted by Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

The "Mixer With the Mentors" was well attended again this year. This get together relies very heavily upon the participation of many of the aviation professional at the Conference in order to be successful. This session was organized by Academic Relations Committee member Dave Byers, ably assisted by Committee members Jeff Gray and Scott McMahon. Approximately 40 delegates very graciously made themselves available in the roles of Mentor, which was much appreciated. As with the Moderators and Presenters in the various sessions, Mentors shared their experiences and expertise with the students to give them a good overall picture of life in the aviation industry, as well as the variety of opportunities present in this field. They also introduced their Mentees to friends and associates in the Exhibit Hall and at various sessions.

As reported in the last edition, we were also joined by 17 high school students from the local area interested in learning more about the career opportunities in aviation. The AAAE Academic Relations Committee plans to work with Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport and with future host airports for inclusion of an opportunity for high school students at future AAAE Annual Conferences.

This was an excellent turnout this year, and positive comments were heard from many. More importantly still, new relationships were formed which will carry through for all the participants well into the future. We look forward to the continued growth of this program and participation in the years to come.