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Eastern Michigan University

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Recommended Citation

Eastern Michigan University, "EMU Women's Swimming and Diving: Freshman Swimmer Pursues a Degree in Aviation Flight Technology" (2014). Eastern Michigan University, Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. EMU Archives, Digital Commons @ EMU
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Freshman Swimmer Pursues a Degree in Aviation Flight Technology

by Linda Hass, Published February 19, 2014

YPSILANTI, Mich. (EMUEagles.com) -- Whether Sarah Cameron is lifting off the runway in an airplane or launching off the starting block at Jones Natatorium, this Eastern Michigan University freshman enjoys soaring through the air.

"It's an adrenaline rush to propel myself through the air, from advancing the throttle of a plane or diving into a pool," says Cameron, who is on track to receive a bachelor's degree in aviation flight technology in 2017. Cameron, 19, also competes on the EMU Women's Swimming and Diving Team.

Eastern was among several universities to offer Cameron a swim scholarship, but when she found out the Green and White also had an aviation program—the deal was sealed. "Flight programs are rare at universities. I was overjoyed to be able to get both at the same place; I've wanted to be a pilot since I was little," says Cameron.

She credits her father, an airline employee, with inspiring her career choice. "He used to introduce me to pilots and enjoyed explaining the concepts of aerodynamics. It was mesmerizing," says the Brownstown native.

Eastern's aviation program, the largest in eastern Michigan and northwest Ohio, offers bachelor's degrees in aviation flight technology for those interested in becoming professional pilots, and in aviation management for those interested in the business side of aviation.
The program, which also offers a dispatch certification course, has 130 students at any given time. Its fleet of 10 aircraft, most equipped with state-of-the-art technology, is based out of Willow Run Airport at Eagle Flight Centre.

Chris Sorenson, chief flight instructor, describes Cameron as the kind of student any instructor hopes to get. "I admire how she balances a full load of classes, swim practice twice per day and flying," he says. "I'm certain that whatever career goal she sets for herself, she'll meet or exceed by leaps and bounds."

Colleen Redmond, director of marketing and recruiting for Eagle Flight Centre, describes Cameron as enthusiastic and self-motivated. "Sarah worked ahead of time to get her private pilot's license before the program began," recalls Redmond. "She picked her target, didn't waiver, and nailed it. I'm excited to see where she's going to go."

Cameron's chosen degree—aviation flight technology—includes specialized courses incorporating aviation business and management skills, aerodynamics, aviation law and regulations and crew resource management.

Program graduates find jobs with regional airlines, work in corporate aviation or join the military flight program. Their employability is aided by such program distinctions as a coveted top-tier certification, called a Part 141 FAA certification, and its reputation for excellence, which is attracting a steady enrollment.

Even so, the class size remains attractively small, says Cameron. "It's like a close-knit family; students know each other on a first-name basis," she says, adding that professors are often available to help after hours. "It's a very welcoming, positive environment. I highly recommend EMU for any prospective students interested in aviation."