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IGNITING THE PASSION IN AVIATION



Two local tertiary students were selected to go on a sponsored trip to Montreal, where they attended the NGAP symposium on attracting talent to the aviation sector. *Photo courtesy of You Sheng.*

As part of an initiative to promote aviation to youths, the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) organised a working paper competition for tertiary students in Singapore. From the entries submitted, two youths were selected to attend the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Next Generation of Aviation Professionals (NGAP) symposium, as well as represent Singapore at the ICAO Model Council Session. Kong You Sheng, an undergraduate in the National University of Singapore's Faculty of Engineering, shares his experience with Bridging Skies.

I was elated to learn that I was one of two students selected to represent Singapore at the ICAO Model Council session in Montreal in December 2014, which meant we had the opportunity to experience how the ICAO Council sessions are held.

Learning Visits

The first part of our programme included site visits to learn about Montreal's aviation industry. We enjoyed a private tour of Bombardier's Global Completion Centre to see how new private jets that arrive in Montreal are fitted to their customers' exact specifications. The process starts from customers selecting the design they want, including material for the furnishings to finalizing the design to the actual assembling of the jet. It was truly impressive to witness the degree of customisation possible and the systematic assembly line.

Next, we visited l'école nationale d'aérotechnique (ENA), which offers training for Aircraft Maintenance Technology, Aircraft Manufacturing Technology and Avionics Technology. I was able to get up close to the 300 aircraft in the school where students are trained to become Licensed Aircraft Engineers. We also saw a real aircraft built by ENA's students, which they could use for a weekend getaway flight!

Global Perspectives on Attracting and Retaining NGAPs

The highlight of the trip was two days spent attending the 2nd ICAO NGAP Symposium, a platform for aviation professionals to share best practices in attracting, developing and retaining NGAPs in aviation.

The symposium underlined the critical need for an adequate supply of competent and professional manpower to manage and maintain the future international air transport system. To that end, we learnt practical solutions that could be implemented globally to grow interest in aviation among the youth. This included showcasing aviation applications in Science and Technology subjects and travelling aviation exhibitions.

We spent the remainder of our trip at the ICAO Model Council session, where representatives from the Council Member States role play as ICAO Council representatives, researching to come up with a working paper and problem solving with the other representatives while in session. At the presentation, representatives from Australia, Nigeria and the United Kingdom presented their working papers on "Challenges relating to the projected shortages of skilled aviation personnel". Their proposals included the expansion of ICAO's Young Aviation Professionals (YAPP) Programme, the formation of an international youth aviation network, and solutions to attract more women to aviation. Eager to join in the discussion, I made some suggestions on activities for the international youth network and ways to improve aviation jobs to attract more women.

The ICAO Model Council session provided us the opportunity to meet other students and NGAPs who are as passionate about aviation as we are. I hope we will have the chance to engage with them in future.

I thank CAAS for this exceptional opportunity. The experience has deepened my interest in aviation, and when I graduate this year, I look forward to shaping the next phase of Singapore aviation.

The programme is part of CAAS' Youth Outreach Initiative. Through aviation activities ranging from open houses to educational workshops and youth ambassador programmes, CAAS aims to develop a passion for aviation in Singapore's youth.