MXET Makes First Industry Visit

Nine sophomore and junior level MXET students took their first field trip to industry traveling to Ft. Worth Texas to visit and tour Bell Helicopter. Mr. Glenn Isbell '96, VP, Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing Innovation and Mr. Glenn Rodriguez, Quality Operations Manager hosted the student group which included: Jeffrey Watts, Micah Erickson, Randall Matthew, Cameryn Lopez, Jonathan Burney, John Tran, Jesse Rosart Brodnitz, Pauline Davila, and Dustin Tish.

Mr. Isbell provided an introduction to Bell Helicopter including an update on their newest aircraft the V-22 (Vertical Take Off and Landing) Osprey and the Bell Air Taxi, a joint project with Uber. Through this overview and discussions, it became very clear that the MXET curriculum which integrates mechanics, electronics, embedded computers, control and communications is a perfect fit for entry level positions and rewarding careers at Bell.

The students then toured the Bell manufacturing facilities. Of particular interest was the production and testing of composite helicopter blades and other major components used in the manufacture of advanced military and commercial aircraft.

After lunch, the group visited the Bell Training Center. Here, the students had the opportunity to learn about the different levels of simulators that

Bell has to train and certify helicopter pilots. In addition, the group visited the aircraft maintenance training facility where Bell provides hands-on training for maintenance personnel from around the world.

The highly successful trip allowed the first cadre of MXET students to see

firsthand the types of entry level positions that will be available in the aerospace industry segment when they graduate. Having the opportunity to interact with these bright and inquisitive young men and women also generated interest in Bell engineers and managers to engage in the new undergraduate program in Mechatronics established by Dr. Reza Langari. The MXET faculty and students are hopeful that Bell will be ready to sponsor the first MXET Capstone project starting in Fall 2018 and to take a leadership role in the development of the MXET Industry Advisory Committee.

The MXET Program will continue to visit and interact with the private and public sectors through other field trips. In so doing, students will get a better idea about opportunities in other industry segments such as oil & gas and automotive. Identifying small and large companies that see value in our Mechatronics graduates will also be valuable in creating an IAC that spans a number of industry segments.

To learn more about the Mechatronics program, contact Dr. Joseph Morgan, jmorgan@tamu.edu.