

AEROSPACE LEADER EYES A WIN-WIN IN NEW LOCATION



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--Iowa State University Research Park

Collins Aerospace, an international leader in the development and deployment of aviation technology around the world, has long been a close partner of Iowa State University. Headquartered in the Eastern Iowa city of Cedar Rapids, the company employs more than 1,200 Iowa State alumni in offices spread across the United States and in internationally in Australia, Europe, the Middle East, South America and Asia.

In addition, Collins Aerospace—formerly known as Rockwell Collins—supports a number of philanthropic causes related to the University, sponsors competitions, encourages employees to participate on advisory boards and other committees, and more. Until recently, however, Collins Aerospace had no physical presence in close proximity to Iowa State. With an eye toward establishing an even deeper relationship with Iowa State and the greater business community in

Central Iowa, Collins Aerospace opened an office in the Iowa State University Research Park during 2018.

“We are always looking for ways to engage with the University and with Iowa State students,” says Kaly Etten, Leader of University Relations at Collins Aerospace. “Opening the ISU Research Park location allows us to keep student employees engaged year-round.”

Katie Knott, an Iowa State alumna and Collins Aerospace Technical Project Manager, says that having the ability to work one-on-one and face-to-face with students throughout the school year is a huge benefit—to both students and the organization.

“When I was an intern about 20 years ago, you took a summer or semester off from college to go to Cedar Rapids, or another Rockwell Collins location, to fully immerse yourself in work,” she says. “Then, after the 3-12 months working, you fully immersed yourself back in school. It felt disjointed on both ends. This changes that dramatically.

“The facility at the Research Park allows students to continue to work on their projects and programs, while staying connected with their teams at our other locations, without sacrificing a whole term of advancement in their coursework.”

Iowa State’s Aerospace Engineering program boasts a rich history—aeronautical engineering classes have been offered at the University since the 1920s—and it is among the top 25 of like programs in the nation. As such, students and graduates of the Iowa State Aerospace Engineering program, are highly sought after. In addition, Iowa State graduates large numbers of mechanical, computer, software, and electrical engineers, all skill sets coveted by Collins Aerospace.

And, as a leader in aviation technology, recruiting skilled employees is vital to the success of Collins Aerospace. Leadership at Collins Aerospace sees establishing a physical location that is easily accessible to students—both



undergraduates and graduates—as a smart business decision.

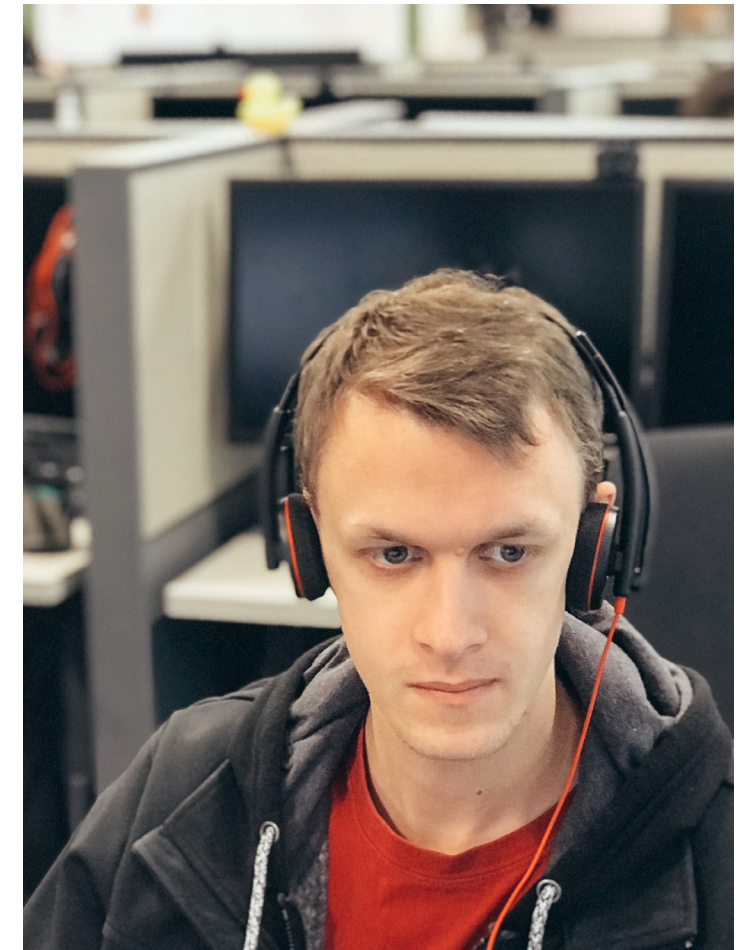
There are primarily two opportunities that are offered from the new office: internships and co-ops. The internships are typically time-limited in scope, a semester or more, and offer a part-time experience. Co-ops are more often like permanent employment positions where students split time more evenly between their work and their studies.

Both types of positions offer an incredibly immersive real-world experience for students, and offers Collins Aerospace access to some of the brightest new minds in the field.

“It is extremely important that we invest in our future,” Knott says. “Our interns and co-ops are innovative, creative, and motivated. They are valued contributors to the programs they work on.”

Etten says setting up shop in Ames is a win-win.

“We consider our student employees a



pipeline for our early career positions and we convert 65-75-percent of our students each year to full time,” Etten says. “Having a site so close to campus gives us the opportunity to engage with students in a unique and consistent way. Even as their internships or co-ops end, we are able to remain aligned as they return for another semester at school, because we are just over a mile from campus.”

The stage is set with the new office to greatly expand opportunities for students. The internships and co-ops available are primarily for engineering students in the aerospace, mechanical, computer and electrical disciplines.

Knott is currently the only full-time Collins Aerospace employee working out of the Ames office currently. There are some Collins Aerospace employees who work remotely in the Ames area who use the office now and then, and there and almost three dozen interns using the space on a regular basis. That is a number that Knott hopes to double by next year.

As Knott and Etten look to the future of the Collins Aerospace location in Ames, they are filled with optimism.

“Collaboration with ISU faculty, staff and students offers a path to success for both sides,” Knott says. “We are constantly looking for new opportunities and will adjust what we are doing here as plans develop and we continue to grow.”

“My dream is to have this office be a busy hub of collaboration, innovation and inspiration,” Etten adds. “I’d like to expand the usage to include multiple full-time employees running projects with teams and interns on site. I’d also like to facilitate more collaboration between Collins Aerospace and the University based right here in our office.”

