Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

Students on the airfield at Gatwick

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Gatwick experience for engineering students

Fourteen engineering students from Northumbria University, Newcastle, have enjoyed a VIP behind-the-scenes visit to Gatwick Airport to learn how Britain's second largest airport operates.

The visit was arranged by Stewart Wingate, the Chief Executive Officer of Gatwick, who graduated from Northumbria in 1994 with a degree in electrical and electronic engineering and continues to support his alma mater.

The students were given a unique opportunity to see how their engineering knowledge and skills will be put into practice in one of largest engineering operations in the world. More than 45 million passengers per year pass through Gatwick on more than 280,000 flights that carry almost 100,000 metric tonnes of cargo.

On a tour of the airfield and terminal, the students saw demonstrations of equipment including jet bridge controls and aircraft line-ups. They were driven around the taxiway to visit the new large hangars for super jumbos and were able to watch the world's largest airliner, an Airbus A380, take-off from the airside.

They were also given the opportunity to walk over the top of the Pier 6 Connector bridge which links the North Terminal to a satellite building. At 197-metres wide, the bridge is wide enough and high enough to allow a Boeing 747 to pass underneath as it taxis around the airport. It is the first bridge of its kind at any UK airport and its scale and construction make it unique in engineering terms.

The invitation to visit Gatwick Airport was extended by Stewart Wingate to high performing students on Northumbria's Mechanical, Civil and Architectural Engineering courses. Fourteen students were chosen for the trip based on their exemplary academic performance in the previous academic year.

Stewart made time in his schedule to personally meet with the students and answer their questions. He gave a presentation on international relationships, sustainability and environmental concerns, investment and business development and working with the local community and invited Gatwick's Head of Engineering, Tony Yates, to talk to the students about the airport's current engineering projects.

Mr Wingate said: "It was a delight, as a Northumbria alumnus, to welcome talented engineering students to Gatwick Airport and to give them real insight in to the range of activities here that relate directly to their learning experience."

Dr Yifan Li, a senior lecturer in Northumbria's Department of Mechanical and Construction Engineering accompanied the students on the trip and said: "The whole trip was outstanding and we are so grateful that Stewart

continues his relationship with the University and shows us his support and experience in this way.

“This tour has provided our students with a first-hand opportunity to reflect on how their engineering knowledge and skills are applied to real world projects, which will no doubt enhance their employability.”

Mechanical and Architectural Engineering student, Nathan Prosser, said: “The visit gave me a real appreciation for the vast amount of important engineering work taking place behind the scenes at Gatwick.”

Northumbria University offers courses in mechanical, civil, automotive, electrical, electronic, construction and architectural engineering, working in partnership with employers such as Akzo Nobel, Balfour Beatty and BAE Systems.

The University is ranked within the world top-300 for engineering and technology, with courses accredited by a number of professional bodies, including the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

For more information on engineering courses at Northumbria, visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/engineering

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