



A SEMI-ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Inside this Issue:

- Lauren Metz - B757/767 CA
- Kristina Huffman - B737 CA
- Erica Swenson - E145 FO
- 2022A PPLI Graduates
- Mentoring Coordinator of the Session: Morgan Bennett

GROWTH THROUGH MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

Edited and compiled by: Kelly Sielis

The goal of the Professional Pilot Leadership Initiative is to accelerate the advancement of women in all pilot professions, facilitate dynamic mentoring, and enhance our leadership role within aviation. Throughout the three phase program, members have the opportunity to take control of their career paths, mentor their peers and give back to the larger aviation community through leadership activities.

The purpose of the biannual PPLI newsletter is to highlight the accomplishments of some of current and former members and while providing inspiration to those who read about their achievements.

Do you know someone who would be a good fit to participate in the PPLI?

Let us know!

mentoring@ninety-nines.org

<https://www.ninety-nines.org/professional-pilot-leadership-initiative-ppli.htm>

Eligibility: 99s members who have achieved (or are close to achieving) their CPL or non-FAA equivalent

Application Deadline: July 31/Jan 31

Lauren Metz: Path to the Captain's Seat

Written by Kelly Sielis

Lauren Metz is currently a captain on the B757/767 at Delta Airlines, and took the time to speak with me about her journey to a career in aviation and her path to the left seat.

Combining Two Passions

Lauren always had an interest in travel and experiencing new cultures even before she became a pilot. After graduating from college, she spent 10 years living abroad in Japan where she worked as a translator for the Japanese broadcasting corporation, NHK, as well as for All Nippon Airways where her interest in aviation grew. Eventually, she started taking flying lessons, traveling as far as Guam, Hawaii and Australia for training. She earned her private pilot's license in Seattle and moved to Santa Monica, CA for her advanced ratings and to work as a CFI. For Lauren, traveling to foreign destinations and meeting new people is still one of the highlights of her job.

Pathway to the Airlines

The world travels continued as a ferry pilot for Cessna, where Lauren flew single engine airplanes from the United States to destinations in Poland, Germany, France, The Netherlands and Turkey. She even trained in England (where she holds citizenship) and Iceland to obtain her EASA ratings - which included an additional 14 written exams and 3 checkrides. Her career took her stateside again when she began flying for SkyWest, and later Spirit, before eventually being hired by Delta airlines on the Airbus A320.



"Expand your team - tap into your network for advice and knowledge"

Transition to the Left Seat

This past year, Lauren upgraded to captain on the B757/767 and we spoke about the unique challenges and opportunities of the position. Prior to becoming a captain herself, Lauren had only flown with one female captain in the 9 years at her current airline. However, in her short time as captain, she has had the opportunity to fly with several female first officers and feels privileged to be a role model for others. Representation is important, she says, and seeing someone like yourself in that role helps you visualize yourself there, and combat the feeling of imposter syndrome. I asked her about her advice for others looking to eventually occupy the left seat, and she says it's important to tap into your circle - your team of peers and mentors that can provide advice and knowledge from their own breadth of experience.

Kristina Huffman: The Importance of Mentorship

Written by Wendy Kranz

What is your current role?

I am a B737 Captain for Alaska Airlines. I am also actively involved with our pilot union, ALPA, on the ALPA Safety Committee as a member of the Human Factors and Training Committee and have served as the B737-MAX SME (Subject Matter Expert) as part of our curriculum development for the 737-MAX. I am also an ALPA new hire mentor involved with our Membership Committee.

Can you tell me a little bit about your time in the PPLI? At what point in your career were you when you joined? What motivated you to join and continue in the program?

My involvement with PPLI was primarily as a Senior Navigator and a Mentoring Coordinator. While I never completed the PPLI program, the structure of the program was something that I felt compelled to get involved with in order to pay forward the phenomenal mentoring I had along my career path. It was not only rewarding to mentor truly amazing and inspiring women, and witness their professional growth, but through the mentoring relationships, I have made lifelong friends from those I worked with in the program.

How can PPLI participants get the most out of this program?

PPLI offers a phenomenally structured program for aspiring aviatrixes to gain leadership skills. By working with mentors further along in their career path, the structure of the program encourages growth and professional development and the opportunity for women to break barriers to achieve new heights in their careers.



"Never give up, and to find your own unique path."

To get the most out of the program, participants need to be prepared to work hard on the development of a Flight Plan that will serve as a guide to short and long term professional goals. Being prepared to expand on one's comfort zones is critical to excelling in the program.

Before starting your aviation career, you were a Medical Physicist. What motivated you to make this significant career change?

The path to my current position as Captain on the B737 for Alaska Airlines started with a childhood dream to be a pilot that took a convoluted path into physics and medicine and landed back in aviation. Having no mentors as I was choosing a career path and an injury that prevented me from achieving my goal of flying as I started college, I embarked on a path of studying physics and eventually completed graduate school and residency in medical physics. It wasn't until my first position out of graduate school, working with a physicians group in Arizona that owned a helicopter, that my passion and desire to fly was reignited. After

accumulating certificates and ratings, flight instructing as a CFI/CFII/MEI and serving as an assistant chief flight instructor, I had the opportunity to meet a person who would change my life. Becky was a Southwest Airlines B737 Captain and had transitioned to the airline world after a career as a pharmacist. This inspired my journey to enter into the field of aviation professionally. Being a stage II cancer survivor, I wanted to pursue my dreams and passions and live life to the fullest. I decided to take the leap of faith into professional aviation full time. After flight instructing and flying charter, I opted to fly part 135 cargo. I started in a Piper Chieftain and quickly moved to a Beech 99 and Fairchild Metroliner. Along this path, I served as a training captain and check airman. During this time I worked diligently to build professional credentials to further my career goals, serving as a Aviation Safety Counselor for the local FSDO and later appointed as a DPE. Being awarded a B737 type rating scholarship through ISA+21 propelled my career to the next level. This was 15 years ago. I joined Alaska Airlines as a B737 First Officer. Later as a senior First Officer, I served in a management role as the Manager of Line Flying Operations for a brief period of time while recovering from medical challenges that prevented me from flying the line. It was inspiring to serve as the first female management level pilot for the airline in their 85 year history at the time. I upgraded to Captain 5 years ago and enjoy flying the line and being involved with union committee work. Most important is still my passion to mentor. I actively mentor a number of new hire First Officers at our airline in a structured 5-phase mentoring program through our union's membership committee.

What advice would you give to pilots who want to make career leaps such as you did?

The biggest piece of advice is to trust your inner desire. Don't let other people define what you can or cannot do, or what you should or should not do. Many people will have opinions, advice, thoughts, and suggestions.

You have to let your own inner compass guide you along your path and weigh other's insights against what you feel is the right path for you. Seek out nonjudgmental mentorship. PPLI is a great way to expand your boundaries and grow. It's something I would highly recommend. Find others who have succeeded along a similar journey and capture the energy and insights that they can offer. There will be ups and downs along the journey. Don't let setbacks deter you from your career goals. Keep your eyes focused on your goals and make them happen. Achieving goals requires being proactive and not a passive recipient. Step out of your comfort zone and don't let preconceived notions define your career path.

What is your view on leadership inside and outside of the cockpit?

As Captain I have quickly learned that leadership has to be adaptive and flexible. Different situations and scenarios require different approaches. My leadership differs whether I am faced with flying with a new hire First Officer lacking experience versus a senior First Officer preparing for upgrade. The key is open communication, good listening skills, assertiveness, professionalism, and the ability to adapt your style depending on the situation.

Any final thoughts that you would like to share?

My closing thoughts to those aspiring to a career in aviation are to never give up and to find your own unique path. One of the reasons that I like to think that my mentees enjoy working with me is that I strive to listen and help them to find their own unique career path. No two journeys are the same, and it is important to find the one that suits your own personal desires, wishes and goals in life.

ERICA SWENSON: A NAVIGATOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Written by Joanne Swanson



What is your current role?

I started with Envoy in June of 2021 and am a First Officer flying the Embraer 175 based in Miami.

How did you get into aviation?

I grew up in aviation, as my dad is a pilot and my mom is a flight attendant. I decided that I wanted to fly for a living after I went for a helicopter ride in Honduras when I was 16. I solo'd one year later. I then completed my ratings and flight instructed at LeTourneau University in Longview, TX.

Tell us about your PPLI journey and the impact it's had on you.

PPLI helped me to get out of the shell I had at my flight school. I graduated college the same time I graduated PPLI in May 2020. When I left college, I still had a strong support system thanks to PPLI. PPLI also helped me to become a mentor and more independent. I continue to be involved with PPLI as a Crew Coordinator that oversees the Mentoring Coordinators.

Are there any challenges that you have faced in your aviation journey?

The biggest challenge I have faced is Covid in 2020. I was supposed to graduate and start working at Envoy, but everything came from full speed to a complete stop. PPLI helped to keep me motivated and stay positive, which I couldn't have done on my own.

What advice do you have for PPLI participants?

My advice is to talk to as many people as you can. Learn everything that you can about different career paths, especially if you don't know what path you'd like to take. You also never know if a certain job you learn about may be a good fit for you later down the road. Learning as much as you can will also help you to become a better mentor to others.

What advice do you have for this career in general?

If your goal is to fly for one of the major airlines, then continue to do volunteer work outside of work. Any pilot can gain flight time, but volunteering helps differentiate yourself. Also, remember to enjoy the ride as you build time and work towards your goals!

What are your future goals?

My next goal is to get on with United Airlines to fly the Airbus A320 with my dad!





From the Coordination Team: CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES!



You have made great strides in your careers, achieved goals, and contributed to the larger aviation community. We'd like to thank you for your hard work and dedication. We wish you the best as you move into the next phase of your careers, and we can't wait to see what else you achieve! An extra thank you to those of you who are volunteering with the PPLI's Coordination Team. Onward!



Alex Merrill



Allison Couch



Amy Stockermans



Annareka Akovity



Chelsea Montgomery



Evelyn Galus



Heather Hills



Inga Brock

"I really enjoyed working with Chelsea this session - she is hard-working, ambitious, and has great things in store!"

- Amy Dodgen

"Inga and her family recently hosted her Captain, Abbey, in their own home. They provided not just a roof, but also their support and affirmation. Inga has returned to the workforce from being a full time parent with the support of her mentors, and now she herself has mentored another mother through the same challenging transition. She demonstrated bravery and courage throughout her time in the PPLI."

- Bex Roman-Amador



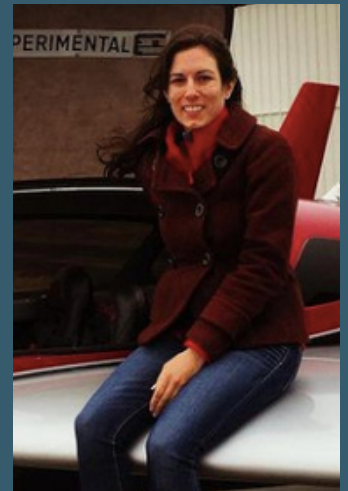
Jeanne Rieck

"I am so proud of Veronica! Not only was she an incredible mentor to Gracie this session, she did it while upgrading to captain at SkyWest and then got on with her dream airline, Southwest. She just passed her type ride last week!"

- Tessa Bodell



Veronica Trujillo



Kelly Sielis

"Sheena is such a bubbly and wonderful human, I am so glad I got to get to know her! She absolutely smashed the goals that she set during PPLI and is well on her way to her dream career as a professional pilot. I couldn't be more proud. Congratulations Sheena!"

- Ali Peterkort



Sheena Templo



Joyce Roberts



Laura Matheson



Zahabia Faizy

"Zoan has accomplished so much this session and has really embraced being a mentor. She has excelled in her relationship with her mentees while handling her own setbacks, expanding her comfort zone, and widening her network. I have been really impressed and I am happy to have worked with her".

-McKenzie Emerenciana



Zoan Harclerode

2022
Spring Session

Captains

Abbey Cross
Alex Saunders
Allison Harker
Allyson Springer
Angela Werner
Anna Ohlweiler
Kritika Vincent
Emilie Blankenship
Gracie Barbour
Irene Lopez
Karen Mitchell
Kelsey Webb
Lauren Featherstone
Meghan Newyear
Minfei Chen
Natacha Martin
Sonia Jimenez
Yolanda Kaunda

Captain's Circle

Antonia Coppey
Chloe Dick
Courtney Richardson
Edith Diop
Jessica Best
Joanne Swanson
Kaylynn Tobias
Kayti Beale
Kristi Bauschke
Lisa Zumkeller
Maria Montero
Megan Dukes
Megan Kojima
Nobi Buntin
Rebecca Erb
Sharon Dhillon
Stephanie Kalal
Stephanie Kight
Wendy Kranz
Yanina Necker

Navigators

Inga Brock
Evelyn Galus
Amy Stockermans
Joyce Roberts
Alex Merrill
Heather Hills
Zoan Harclerode
Annareka Akovity
Veronica Trujillo
Zahabia Faizy
Jeanne Rieck
Sheena Templo
Laura Matheson
Chelsea Montgomery
Kelly Sielis
Allison Couch

Senior Navigators

Stephanie Parks
Priya Doobaree

Coordination Team

Senior Leadership

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Mariana Baratto	Abi Amboni
Christine Oksas	Courtney Robson
Kritika Vincent	Christine von Bulow
Camille Griffin	Jessica Richardson
Taru Vo	Stefanie Sun
Lorena Knapp	Anastasia Vetrova
Jungyeun "Maria" Choi	Contessa Bishop
Cindy Santoso	Melissa Shantz
Emily Salley	Adva Amir
Shannon Miller	Lacee Law
Ella Stersky	Jane Carino
Natalie Codd	Cathy MacArthur
Erica Swenson	

Mentoring Coordinators

Ali Peterkort	Michelle Kiesel
Amy Dodgen	Morgan Bennett
Anna Yackshaw	Rachel Freeman
Auste Rayome	Stacy Sheard
Beth Powell	Tessa Bodell
Bex Roman-Amador	
Courtney Porterfield	
Eran Artigues	
Kaitlyn Bussell	
Kim Barwick	
Lauren Metz	
Lynzie Hudson	
McKenzie Emerenciana	

**Mentoring
Coordinator
of the Session**



Morgan Bennet

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR
PARTICIPANTS &
COORDINATION TEAM!
Visit: bit.ly/PPLITeam

thank you

This newsletter wouldn't have been possible without the help of our interviewers **Wendy Kranz** and **Joanne Swanson**. Thank you for all your help and dedication !

Additionally, thank you to **Lauren, Kristina** and **Erica** for sharing their experiences and providing insights for the rest of us as we pursue our own aviation goals!



See you next session!