

Renton Municipal Airport Internship; Gemma Gibbons 2021

I remember sitting at my desk during my junior year of high school on my iPad during Community Period at Bellarmine Preparatory School and searching for universities that had various management degrees. With the weight of the world on my shoulders and the gnawing uncertainty in my stomach, I had no idea where I wanted to further my education in terms of my undergraduate degree. While browsing I saw an advertisement for various Aviation Management programs, which at the time I was unaware that they existed. Ever since I can remember, anytime I have seen a plane fly overhead or have been at an airport I have had this indescribable feeling of excitement that only aviators can relate to. It is the feeling all of us aviation folk alike can relate to that never grows old. It was at this point in my life that I knew I was destined to pursue my aviation passion with a career and degree in aviation management.

For those reading this, you may be wondering who is this strange person that has been able to describe why our non-aviation friends give us sideways looks when we talk about planes. Let me introduce myself. My name is Gemma Victoria Gibbons, and I am 22-year-old full-time student who is on track to graduate a quarter early with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation Management and a minor in General Business. I am currently enrolled as a student at Central Washington University while working full-time at Renton Municipal Airport. I would not be in my current position without resources like WAMA or mentors encouraging me to apply for an internship position.

In June of 2021, I started as the Intern at Renton Municipal Airport. KRNT is a unique general aviation airport because every single Boeing 737 plane you have ever flown on was manufactured at Renton Municipal Airport. We have a FAA Air Traffic Control Tower contracted by Serco without the airport being a Part 139 airport. Furthermore, KRNT is the 6th

busiest Airport in the Pacific Northwest, and 4th busiest in Washington State based off operations. The Airport also has the only Seaplane base (W36) in the Northwest that allows for sea and land operations. Out of about fifty applicants, I was truly humbled to have been given the Internship position and used the opportunity to my advantage.

While interning at Renton Municipal Airport I worked towards earning my Level 1 Airport Safety and Training Institute (ATSI) certification founded by the American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE). I was able to take part in Boeing's Logistics Meetings to coordinate details regarding the maiden flight for the Boeing 737 MAX 10 from Renton Municipal Airport. I attended pre-construction meetings which required me to coordinate traffic plans and project updates with contractors, while trying to develop the airport according to the Airport Master Plan. Another project I was tasked with was updating the National Based Aircraft Inventory for the FAA's 5010 Airport Master Record. Alongside this project, I was responsible for reviewing sixty-eight Lease Agreements, to ensure tenants were following the City of Renton's insurance policy, and that their Aircraft Airworthiness was up to date for the current year. With my interest in Aviation Law, I was given the opportunity to work directly with the Airport Business Coordinator and the City's Attorney Office in drafting new amendments to tenants' lease agreements. Through the drafting process I learned the legal jargon and procedures of writing and reading formal lease amendments. Aside from this, I assisted in the process of writing a grant application to the Department of Ecology with the Airport's Deputy Manager. By the end of my internship, I learned to exercise my radio communication skills with Air Traffic Control, and increased my knowledge of Wildlife Management, Aviation Fuel Inspections, Runway Pavement Projects, and Advisory Circulars/Grant Assurances.

Aside from expanding my knowledge in aviation management areas, my internship taught me the significance of networking and relationship building. During this time, I visited and established professional relationships with top management teams at Seattle International Airport, Paine Field, Boeing Field, Tucson International Airport, Arlington, Auburn, and Tacoma Narrows Airport. Since my internship, I have been hired on as a full-time employee at Renton Municipal Airport and have had several instances where I have used my connections with other airports while working in my current position. Networking allowed me to have one of the Part 139 Airports offer me a direct hire position before graduating from university and has allowed for other job opportunities to come my way. Not only has the internship jump-started my aviation career, but I have also presented to aviation classes at Central Washington University as a guest speaker to promote the importance of internships and get students excited for their future careers. Currently Central is using me as a resource for students who need help applying for internships, resume and cover letter building, and someone who can give first-hand advice.

I would like to sincerely thank the Washington Airport Management Association for pushing students like myself to put themselves out there and educate students about upcoming internships. Going forward, please feel free to use me as a resource for other students or future conferences and I would love to be involved in any way I can help. Thank you for the opportunity and motivation I have been given to go forward and be the next generation of aviation.