

Chief Engineer Reflection - 7/10/19 – 28/10/19

My time as chief engineer covered an extremely important time frame in the project, although there were no major deadlines during my time. In terms of leadership this time could be considered the time to step up and really get stuck into the role as chief engineer. With my time being from the start of the project it was up to me to mould the 9 students into a team, a task that the chief engineer needed to do quickly, efficiently and effectively because if this wasn't done well the team dynamics and worth ethic could suffer for the entire year. In week one we were asked to sort team roles and chief engineer schedule. I took it upon myself to speak up and take charge of this situation. Making sure everyone was happy with the roles they were assigned is something as a leader you will have to deal with issues with people having to come to compromises with their main tasks. With 6 roles to split between 9 the best was around this was to have a vote for desired roles and roles that team members would least like to work on. This means that any compromise, the blow wouldn't be drastic leaving them with their least preferred area of expertise. During this session, I was keen for the group to gel as we would be working together for a large chunk of the coming year. This time wasn't about working towards a target for the coming deadlines, but for team bonding in an open learning environment brainstorming ideas that people wanted to incorporate into the project and have a bit of fun getting to grips with the task ahead, in reflection we could of spent this time working towards deadlines but I felt the bonding was something that was needed for the project to get going well.

After our initial meeting it was easy to see the dynamics in the group, with all 9 students I could sense the ease was at with nobody feeling much stress about the project. We set up a group chat and I organised our second meeting to follow after our supervisor meeting on 15/10/19. During this meeting we completed our tasks for the Friday. This showed me that without being an extremely authoritative figure in the group we still worked efficiently to an objective by finishing work 2 days before our booked lab session. This gave me an idea of what the group were capable of, and how I should act in the next few weeks as chief engineer, which was to set initial meeting times, and allow group members to work to a task without too much distraction. That being said it was still a requirement to make sure each member knew the task that was being set and let them express their own work in that task before then referring to the groups opinion on that piece of work from an individual. With a group of 9 I found the best way to complete tasks was to have smaller groups of 2/3. This made the group work more efficiently and the dynamics seemed more positive with discussions flowing through the whole group better, communication started to really develop. Over these first few weeks that was my main objective, to get everyone comfortable with each other and begin seeing peoples' strengths and weaknesses.

I feel as though my stint as team leader has shown me that I can adapt to certain individuals by changing how I approach each person with a task for them to do, or with help completing something I am working on. As chief Engineer this is something that has developed me showing myself a leader isn't always barking orders but working quietly with each member to try and get the best out of them. For future reference, I will take away that working closely with individuals in a team will help grow the team as a whole. I feel as though I have affected the aircraft design drastically, although we haven't had a chance to get into detail of design aspects by being able to allow everyone to express their thoughts the concept design process has given our ideas an area to develop into what will hopefully be something special.