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Boeing Started from the Top of the Difficulty Scale

06.23.2009 | Science, Faculty A University of Dayton researcher who has worked with Boeing said today's news about the Boeing Dreamliner delays isn't a surprise.

"Boeing started from the top of the difficulty scale," said Danny Eylon, chair of the University of Dayton graduate materials engineering program. "The barrel-shaped composite structure of the 787 is so unique and challenging even for smaller aircraft, let alone a wide-body, so there is no surprise that there are last moment needs for some small modifications."

Eylon, a titanium expert, spent two months in 2006 at three different Boeing facilities as part of an information-sharing program between Boeing and university experts in various aviation disciplines. Boeing only fills 12 spots a year for the Boeing Welliver Faculty Fellowship Program.

Ral Ordez, a University of Dayton associate professor of electrical and computer engineering, spent the summer of 2008 in the Boeing program. When news hit late last year that there were delays with the Dreamliner's construction, Ordez said the aircraft would be well worth the wait.

"It's a great airplane. For a customer who flies a lot, the Dreamliner will be fantastic," Ordez said. "It will be a treat to fly in it."

Ordez, an expert in flight control systems, was embedded in Boeing's 787 flight control group. He climbed inside the first 787 prototype and took a spin in the Dreamliner flight simulator. Ordez said he cannot discuss specifics because of proprietary reasons. He also delivered lectures on control methods to Boeing's flight control engineers.

The University of Dayton performs more aerospace research than any other Ohio university. It is in the top 30 of all U.S. universities in engineering research.

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of media relations, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu.