

April 20, 2017

National Travel Safety Board

490 L'Enfant Plaza SW

Washington, DC 20024

To whom it may concern,

My name is Andrew Hoyler, and I am a Certified Flight Instructor for Purdue University. On the night of March 29, 2017, I was in N587PU, on the same KLAF-KFWA-KSBN-KLAF routing as N580PU.

Throughout the afternoon of Wednesday, March 29, the weather was looked at many times. All mediums of weather forecasting were looked at, from radar summaries, to satellite imagery to terminal area forecasts to determine if the night cross country would be possible to do. While the winds were out of Purdue's dual flight limits earlier at the day at KLAF and KFWA, as the evening rolled on, the winds died down and were within limits. While the winds were the major concern weather wise, there were also small patches of rain near South Bend that were analyzed and discussed. Based on our observations, the weather would be clear by the time we arrived at South Bend approximately two hours after departure from Lafayette, and winds would remain below limits.

When my student and I arrived at the airport to begin final preparations for our flight, there was much discussion as to whether or not A), the flight would be able to be completed VFR and within Purdue limitations, and B), whether the route should be changed. My student obtained an official DUATS weather briefing and gave me his opinion. He noted that the winds were near dual limits at Fort Wayne, and that he would continue to monitor the winds as the night went on. Despite being near limits, they appeared to be right down the runway, should we be landing runway 9. After he reported this to me, I received my own personal DUATS weather briefing while he preflighted the aircraft. I noticed the winds at Fort Wayne were about five knots below Purdue limits, but were expected to remain steady throughout the night. I had faith that my student would be able to handle the winds, especially since they were right down the runway. I then looked at the various weather maps around South Bend to ensure that we would not be flying near any convective activity, and it appeared that the only chance of precipitation would be a light rain shower; however, ceilings were forecasted to be around 8,000 feet. Upon preflighting the aircraft, I asked my student if he felt comfortable with the winds, to which he said he did. I discussed our options with the student and instructor of N580PU, and we discussed what they had obtained from their weather briefings.

After much discussion, myself, my student, and the two other planes decided to carry on with our flight as planned. Prior to stepping in the plane, I took one last look at the winds and weather throughout our route, and it seemed as if it was clearing up significantly.

Our flight to Fort Wayne went smoothly. My student and I were the first Purdue aircraft to depart Lafayette and arrive at Fort Wayne. While talking to Fort Wayne approach, we were told to

expect runway 5, despite the winds favoring runway 9. The reason that we were to be landing on runway 5 was due to regional jet traffic landing both ahead and behind us; runway 9 was too short for the commercial traffic. I asked my student if he was comfortable landing on runway 5 with the winds, to which he said he was. My student had very nice crosswind correction techniques throughout the semester, so I did not have much hesitation continuing for runway 5, where the winds were right at Purdue limits. On our first approach to landing, we were asked to keep our speed up as there was a regional jet right behind us. The approach and landing went smoothly, and we remained in the pattern. After another lap in the pattern, we were on downwind when I heard Fort Wayne tower instruct N586PU to go around, and try to get in contact with N580PU. The tower controller tried twice more to get in contact with N580PU with no response. Figuring that N580PU may have had a radio failure, I figured I would attempt to get in touch with the instructor myself and possibly be able to relay instructions from tower in case the problem was actually a radio failure. I sent the first text message to the instructor of N580PU at 01:58 UTC saying, "You good?", followed by "Towers calling you". I sent a third text a minute later asking, "Where are you?" to try to get a position report for the tower controller. I then received a string of three texts from the instructor of N580PU at 01:59 UTC stating, "We went done", "Send trucks", "Down".

Upon receiving these messages, I immediately alerted the tower controller. It did take a few tries for me to get my message of "N580PU went down, roll the trucks" to tower, partially due to my lack of clarity of voice due to shock. I then texted the instructor know that the trucks were on their way, and at 02:02 UTC, asked for their position so that the firetrucks could find them. While doing this, I began coordinating with the tower controller to circle the airport at a low altitude to be able to maintain cell service so I could continue to relay information from the instructor to the tower controller and fire crew. This was approved, and I was told by the instructor that they were on the "Left side of 5", which I relayed to tower. I then received a message from the instructor of N586PU at 02:04 UTC, which said he had talked to Purdue's dispatch and had let them know what was going on.

Once I knew that the crew of N580PU were found by the crash crew, I asked if it was possible to land on another runway to get in touch with Purdue's dispatch. I was told that the airport was closed, but I could divert to a nearby airport. We then were given a vector to the nearest airport, which would have given us an opportunity to formally coordinate with Purdue. I remained on frequency with tower to pass along any information that I may have received in the coming minutes. I then received a phone call from a full-time instructor who was at Purdue at the time, however, could not hear what he was saying over the sound of the engine. I then had my student, who had a Bluetooth headset, call back the instructor to receive instructions. We were told to continue on with the cross country, and that they were in contact with the necessary parties to handle the situation. The rest of the flight went on as planned, with all weather at South Bend VFR and rain free.

Purdue does have a set of checks and balances to prohibit planes from taking off into conditions that exceed student limits. The wind, ceiling, and visibility limits are clearly posted not only in our TCO, but posted in the dispatch area as well. If a student and instructor attempts get dispatched for flight into conditions that are outside of these limits, a full timer or dispatch employee will point out the weather and will tell them that they are unable to fly. For weather below the Purdue limitations, as was the case on March 29, the decision is left up to the flight instructor and student to decide. There was much discussion, as previously mentioned, as what to do this night, but the final consensus between my

student and I was that we could get the flight done in a safe manner, while respecting and staying below the Purdue limitations, as we were able to do.

Thank you for your time.

Andrew Hoyler

Certified Flight Instructor

Purdue University