

UW-Madison now allowing drones on campus for research and instruction

Posted on Monday, Jun 19, 2017

A new policy at UW-Madison will now allow drones to be flown on campus for the purposes of research and teaching.

The rule allows unmanned aircraft systems — otherwise known as drones — to be used in indoor and outdoor setting. But it doesn't allow their use on campus for recreational activities. Registered student organizations, individual students, faculty, staff, contractors and other university affiliates can apply for approval.

Grant Petty, UW-Madison professor of atmospheric science, says drone technology is quickly advancing, opening up the possibilities for use of these unmanned aerial vehicles.

“This rapid development has posed a major challenge to both the FAA, which is racing to come out with appropriate regulations governing the use of UAVs, and to prospective faculty, staff and student users of UAVs, who must understand and operate within those rules as they are created,” says Petty.

He says the university is now in “a far better position” to explore drone use in innovative ways.

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