

Double Duty: Cheering and Engineering

From stadiums to space, this Boeing engineer brings energy to all she does

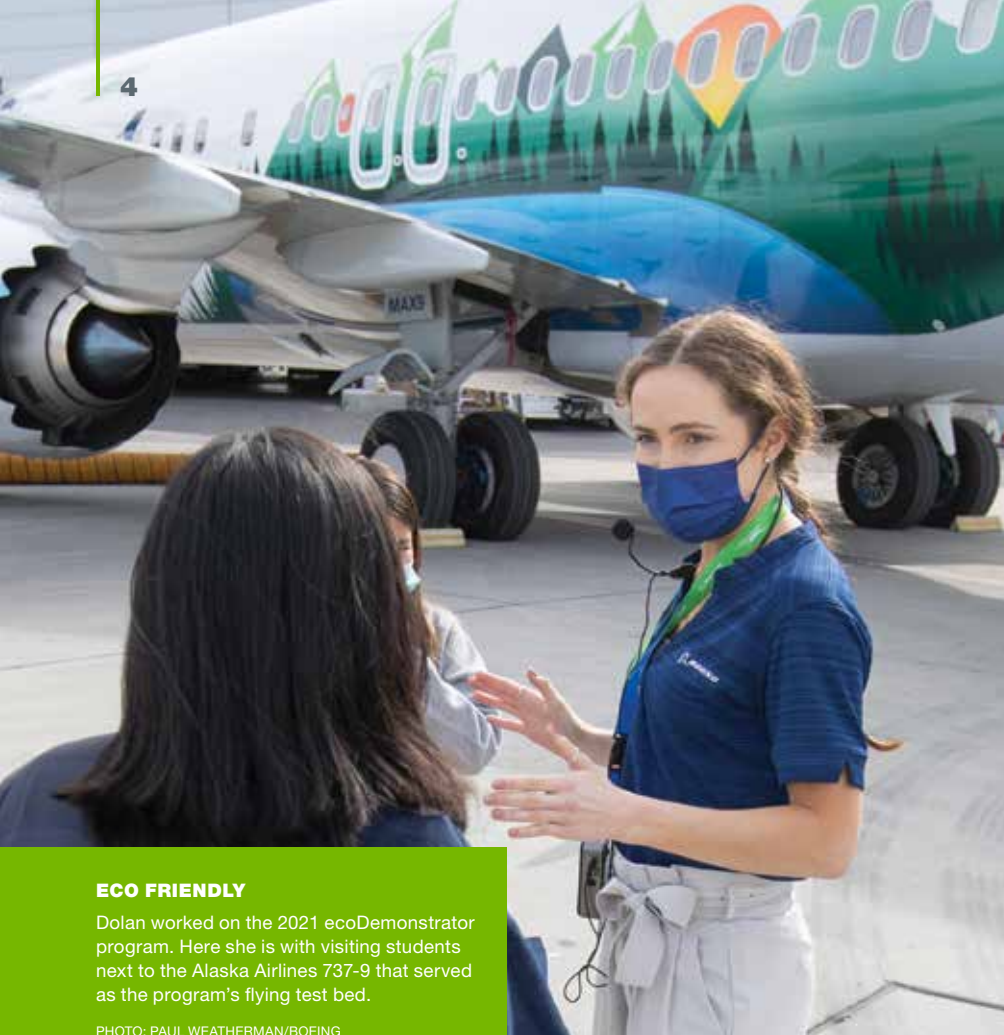
BY MYCHAELA KEKERIS, BOEING WRITER

Don't ask Megan Dolan to decide.

"A lot of people said I wouldn't be able to do both, but I was able to make it work," she said.

When Dolan wasn't working on a flight test program, she was cheering on the Seattle Seahawks as a National Football League cheerleader.

PHOTO: SEATTLE SEAHAWKS



ECO FRIENDLY

Dolan worked on the 2021 ecoDemonstrator program. Here she is with visiting students next to the Alaska Airlines 737-9 that served as the program's flying test bed.

PHOTO: PAUL WEATHERMAN/BOEING

“It’s so awesome stepping out onto Lumen Field on Seahawks game day in front of 70,000 fans. You feel the energy vibrating in your entire body,” Dolan said. “It’s so exciting, energetic and loud. The fans are awesome. Rain or shine, they are there. To get to dance and do what I love on that field for those fans was really special.”

Dolan is a master at bridging the seemingly different worlds of cheerleading and engineering. In her role on the ecoDemonstrator program, she worked as a technical integrator to take technologies out of the lab and test them in the air to solve real-world challenges for airlines, passengers and the environment.

“It’s a lot of time management,” Dolan said. “I’ve learned how much I really do love both. I knew I didn’t want to give up dance, and I knew I didn’t want to give up aerospace. I think if you are passionate about both, you’ll figure out a way to make it work.”

Dolan started tap-dancing at age 2 at her local community center. She gained a love for it and an appreciation for the music and rhythm. She then started different dance styles, including jazz, ballet, lyrical, contemporary, modern and hip-hop. “When I got to college, I started doing pom,” she said. “I always knew I wanted to keep doing it, but I was nervous because there are only so many hours in a day.”

Dolan attended the University of Washington (UW) knowing she wanted to be an engineer, but she also wanted to pursue her other passion — dancing.



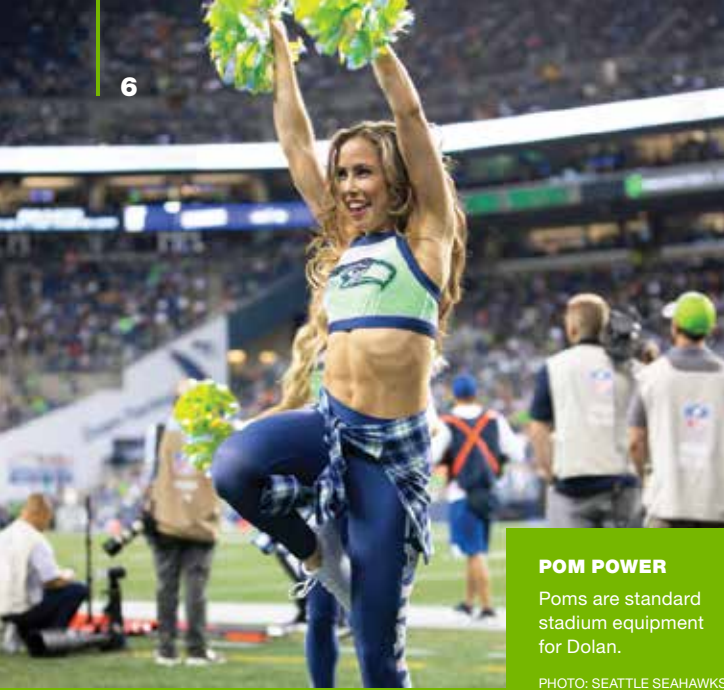
FLIPPIN’ AWESOME

Megan Dolan started dancing when she was 2 years old.

PHOTO: SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

“ I’ve always been interested in engineering, specifically aerospace. My dad flew F/A-18s in the U.S. Navy, and my grandfather flew B-17s in World War II. And multiple other family members flew, like my mom! Flight’s always been something I was interested in, but they never pushed me, which I’m thankful for. They let me figure out for myself how cool it is.”

**MEGAN DOLAN,
BOEING ENGINEER**



POM POWER

Poms are standard stadium equipment for Dolan.

PHOTO: SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

“I love airplanes, but I also love space. So I’m really excited to see something totally new and work on a completely different team, on the defense and space side. I’m from a military family, so I’m excited to support that.”

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Dolan was able to keep dancing along with maintaining her course load in college. “People told me I wasn’t going to be able to complete my aeronautical and astronautical engineering degree while dancing on the UW Dance Team for four years, being captain and going to nationals — and sometimes I almost believed them. But I’m glad I didn’t,” she said.

In 2019, Dolan landed an internship at Boeing, which led to a full-time position. Once she got a job, she continued to balance professional cheer along with professional engineering. Dolan’s next career move is to Boeing Defense, Space & Security (BDS).

“I’m excited. It’s definitely bittersweet, because I loved my previous job,” she said. “I feel like I’ve learned so much in an integration role and working with cross-functional teams. But I’m just as excited to transition to BDS and work on spacecraft. I’m also looking to find a way to continue dancing as I move to a new Boeing site.

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DAWG DANCER

Dolan captained the University of Washington Dance Team.

PHOTO: CECILE MILLER PHOTOGRAPHY

Dolan said all she does is a balancing act, and she encourages others to follow their dreams.

“You can learn from every person and every experience. All the soft skills and problem-solving skills that I learned outside of school translated so well to now working in the aerospace industry, post-college,” Dolan said.

Her advice to fellow dreamers and doers: “Take advantage of every experience you have. Learn as much as you can from everything. When you are studying tough material or you’re trying to solve this difficult homework problem and you’re discouraged, always remember you’re capable.

“If you really want to succeed in this field, keep working hard, seek out mentors and bring your passion to everything you do.” **IQ**