SAE Hosts Baja Car Race Competition for Foundation Members

Members of the WMU Foundation had a fun experience after their meeting on the Parkview campus recently. The students from the Society of Automotive Engineering (SAE) hosted a competitive event for the foundation members, where each had the opportunity to race the Baja car around the Campus Circle to see who could complete it in the fastest time. Foundation members each received their own personalized Bronco helmets for the event that were generously provided by WMU’s Development Office.

Members also had the opportunity to see up close, the other CEAS student project vehicles including the Sunseeker and the Formula Cars.

It All Starts With Innovation

Engineering students from both the Entrepreneurial Engineering II and Engineering Design courses presented their concepts/prototypes for new products and businesses at the Parkview campus. Attendees were asked to actively participate in assessing student projects by investing “Engineering Dollars” that they were given to them as they arrived. They decided which projects or project that they wanted to invest in after listening to the students give their pitches. One prototype on display had already been awarded 3rd place at the Accelerate Michigan Competition held in November which was a check for $10,000. Judging from the unique CEAS student projects exhibited, Michigan holds huge potential for new and exciting ideas from its young entrepreneurs.

“To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle requires creative imagination and marks real advances in science.”

~ Albert Einstein
Scenes From the Fall 2011 Senior Engineering Design Project Conference

Design and Build of Lightweight, Packable Tree Stand
L-R: Justin Dragicevich, Andrew Machacek, & Tim Witherow. Not pictured, Joe Miller.

Hollow Core Wind Turbine Generator With a Circumnavigating Rotor
L-R: Neil Hurley, Mathew Olson & Cong Yang

BroncoBot: Multi-tool Additive Manufacturing System
L-R: Bailey Cupp, Tipu Sultan, Andrew Tucker & Brian Stolla

Mouse over to see the BroncoBot in action below, you may need to click an options bar to allow the video to play.

Solar Heat and Daylight Harvester System Controllers
L-R: Tyler Gravlin, Mark Valzonis, & Michael Serota

Optical System for Automotive Combustion Chamber Imaging Studies
L-R: Patrick Kreun & Trevor Lambert
CEAS Career Connection

The Michigan Industry Road Trip is a brand new 5-day trip developed by Chris Sell of Career and Student Employment Services, and is meant to give CEAS students the opportunity to visit world-renowned companies within Michigan during WMU’s 2012 spring break (March 5th – 9th). While traveling across the state in a chartered bus and staying at hotels in the Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Detroit communities, the participants will be touring companies, net-working with professionals, connecting with WMU Alumni in industry, and learning about all of the incredible engineering opportunities available to college students and graduates in Michigan. The staff at Career and Student Employment Services strongly encourages freshmen and sophomore students to apply for this dynamic program, although the selection committee will also likely consider students with junior status for this year's trip. Students selected for the program will pay a registration fee of $250 which covers lodging, transportation, and most of the meals incurred during the trip. There are also two $250 STEP scholarships for selected students who are part of the STEP program (the scholarship covers the registration fee). The application deadline is Monday, January 9th. Application packets can be picked up at the CEAS Advising Complex (E-102) at the Parkview campus, Career Services at 1401 Ellsworth Hall on main campus, and online. For your convenience, the packet can be downloaded at: Industry Road Trip 2012 Application Packet.

A Perfect Day for CEAS Events

An open house, Innovation Day, and the SAE Baja car event and exhibitions were on the schedule of activities that some K-12 school students were able to experience recently. A bustling group of 7th and 8th graders from the Gagie School had a beautiful day to tour the Parkview campus, view CEAS student projects, see the Sunseeker, the Formula cars and the opportunity to be excited spectators for an outside SAE sponsored race event. Several high school students and their parents were attending the open house and were impressed by the CEAS student’s project vehicles and all the unique entrepreneurial displays from the Innovation Day presentations. The CEAS campus was filled with activities for students and adults that they described as educational and fun.
Greetings From the Peace Corps Panama

Emma Luther is a 2010 graduate from the Civil Engineering program. She was working for American Electric Power on their nuclear plant and took a leave of absence to work for the Peace Corps in Panama. Emma recently wrote Dr. Haluk Aktan, chair for the Civil Engineering department and shared some of her experiences so far. Emma is pictured right with her host family. Dr. Aktan thought it would be great to share her letter so everyone who reads it can appreciate the work she is doing. So with Emma’s permission the letter reads as follows:

Buenas Everyone!

How are you? I’m doing well here in the little village called Cerro Ceniza in the Comarca Ngabe-Bugle region of Panama. I have been living in this community for about 3 weeks now and will continue to live here for the next two years. I finished training in the environmental health sector of the peace corps at the end of October, and swore in as an official peace corps volunteer on October 20, 2011. From here on out I will be living and working with an indigenous tribe called the Ngabes, where they don’t have much, but live very happy lives.

I mainly eat rice, beans, yucca, chicken, and other assorted vegetables, roots, and fruits you can find out here on the land. The bananas here are so delicious and can be picked right off the tree. Also coffee grows here and I never knew how it looked right off the tree, but it looks red when ripe then you have to peel off the outside to actually see the two coffee beans inside. Kinda cool, huh? I also drink a lot of coffee, cacao, and chicha here. Chicha is like a fruity drink that can be made with any fruit or corn, water, and a lot of sugar. It’s kind of like koolaid but way better or worse sometimes. lol

My first 3 months in my community I have to live with host families to better integrate into my community and build trust. Everyone lives in huts with dirt floors and palm leaves for a roof. Some families have latrines and water sources and some don’t. Hence why I’m here. It makes me really appreciate the running water and electricity we have back home in the states. At night time my head lamp is my guide, but I usually go to bed pretty early anyways from all the cultural and language adjustments.

I have a hut that I will get to live in after my first 3 months in site, where I’ll have my own gas stove, latrine, tap for water, and my own space. Finally! ;)

But not until the end of January so I still have a ways to go before freedom surely arises. It has been difficult having to do everything the old fashion way, like washing my clothes by hand on a rock, filtering my own water, hiking everywhere I need to go, and cooking most things from scratch. It has also been hard communicating with the people here because Spanish is also their second language and their indigenous language is primarily what they speak. I have however, really understood how lucky and fortunate I am to have been born where I was.

A normal day for me here is waking up at 6am when the sun rises, going to the bathroom in the latrine down the hill, and eating breakfast with my host family in the hut designated for cooking. Then I’ll read for a bit at the table and talk amongst my host family and plan where I’ll go for the day. Typically I walk to different families’ houses and introduce myself and get to know them and allow them to get to know me. There are about 1000 people living here all up and down the ridges of the mountains. So it’s going to take me about 3 months to hit all the houses once or twice. Then it usually starts raining in the afternoon, because it’s the rainy season til the end of December, so I start heading back to my host family’s house. I hang with them for awhile, eat dinner, then take a bucket shower in the designated shower/laundry area. Then I talk some more, but mainly listen, and go to bed around 8pm. Seems like a slow day but visiting families, or ‘pasearing’ as us peace corps volunteers call it, makes the day go by pretty fast.

I find it hard being 1.5 hours hiking from my closest volunteer, but I get by by talking with my community and learning new languages; Spanish and Ngabere. The people are very friendly and always seem to have work to do. I travel out of site occasionally to use the internet, buy things, and take a nice hot shower to keep me sane from time to time. I also enjoy visiting other volunteers at their sites to be around English speaking people again.

Overall, I’m pretty happy but do miss the small things about being home. Sometimes I wonder what my life would be like if I would have stayed in Kalamazoo instead of coming here. Would I really appreciate what I had? Would I know what missing people really felt like? Would I have been happier? I’m not sure, but as the days pass I find myself growing more humble and stretched in ways I could not have imagined. I keep all of you in my thoughts and look forward to the day we can sit in our warm houses together and eat and drink the food we love. ;)

Take care and I miss you all.

Love, Emma