

SIUE Engineering Students take third in regional robotics competition

by Megan Wieser
April 6 2017 9:37 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - Four senior design students from the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Engineering's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering achieved third place in the IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) Region 5 Robotics Competition in Denver, Colo. on Saturday, April 2.

The IEEE is one of the world's largest professional societies, with Region 5 encompassing most of the central part of the country.

SIUE's team comprised Lydia Klaus, of Edwardsville, Oren Pincock, of St. Louis, Scott Thompson, of Florissant, Mo., and Sean Hovey, of Springfield. The students created a small autonomous tunnel-mapping robot and placed third overall in the contest, garnering a cash prize of \$400.

The contest emulated a real world application where a robot might be asked to map the precise location of underground electrical cables. A total of 32 teams were registered for this year's contest. Among the other universities participating in the Region 5 contest were Louisiana State University, University of Oklahoma, Missouri Institute of Science & Technology and the University of Texas.

"I was elated that this year's team could experience the joy of standing on stage and having their talent and hard work acknowledged," said George Engel, PhD, professor in the Department of Computer and Electrical Engineering and the team's faculty advisor. "While the team developed thousands of lines of program code, engineering is more than just equations and programming, it's about teamwork and persevering in order to create products that make people's lives better. Participating in this type of event helps teach these concepts to students."

Also attending the conference were Tyler Friedel, of Brussels, and Dan Ashbaugh, of Glen Carbon, who participated in the IEEE Region 5 Ethics Competition. The contest presents two-person student teams with a case study. Students identify the ethical issues faced by the engineers in the hypothetical case and then propose steps the engineers should take to avoid charges of ethical misconduct, while minimizing harm done to others involved in the case.

"This competition helps students think about what they should do when faced with an ethical dilemma," Engel said. "It is important that they wrestle with these issues as students in a contest setting, rather than out in the workplace where the penalty for taking inappropriate action can be quite severe, for example, loss of their job or even worse."

SIUE has participated in the IEEE Robotics Competition since 1995.

The [SIUE School of Engineering](#) offers one of the most comprehensive and affordable engineering programs in the St. Louis region with eight undergraduate degrees, five master's degrees and two cooperative doctoral programs, all housed in a state-of-the-art facility. Students learn from expert faculty, perform cutting-edge research, and participate in intercollegiate design competitions. Companies in the metropolitan St.

Louis area provide students challenging internships and co-op opportunities, which often turn into permanent employment. All undergraduate programs are accredited by their respective accreditation agencies.

