



SIUE team finishes ninth at Blizzard Baja

by Megan Wieser
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EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Cougar Baja team had two cars make successful runs at Michigan Tech's annual Blizzard Baja during the weekend of Feb. 17-18 in Houghton, Mich.

Senior Seth Kirchner, president of SIUE Cougar Baja, combined with 14 teammates to see their No. 94 car finish ninth overall, while their No. 34 car placed 23rd in a field of 47 cars.

"The team's goals for the trip were to get our members that have not been able to drive in competition a chance to race," Kirchner said. "Overall, the competition was quite successful, everyone was able to participate during the race and both of our cars survived the entire four-hour endurance race."

Kirchner noted that the track was not implementing the Black Flag rule where after a car gets stuck on a certain obstacle three times, that competitor is removed from the race. "Many of the teams were getting stuck and clogging up the track, not allowing us to fully use our four-wheel drive capabilities," he said. "That contributed to finishing lower than we'd expected."

The Michigan Tech Blizzard Baja Enterprise is a student-led organization that designs, builds and tests single-seat, off-road vehicles in a national competition. Students use modern engineering and manufacturing processes to enhance vehicle performance by focusing on reduction of vehicle mass, maximization of drive train efficiency, improvement of driver visibility and comfort, and optimization of off-road vehicle handling and maneuverability.

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.