



SIUE Cougar Rockets Place Fourth in National Competition

by Megan Wieser
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EDWARDSVILLE – The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Engineering’s (SOE) Cougar Rockets enjoyed a strong showing in the team’s first national competition, placing fourth at the 2021 Argonia Cup.

The Argonia Cup, held in late March, is an annual competition that challenges collegiate teams to design, construct and execute a multi-disciplined rocketry project through innovative engineering and technology concepts.

“Cougar Rockets is a relatively recent addition to our student organizations,” said SOE Dean Cem Karacal, PhD. “They started with great enthusiasm a few years ago, and managed to build and launch their first high altitude rocket in record time. The progress

they've made in such a short time and the national ranking they achieved speaks volumes about the caliber and dedication of the students involved in this organization.”

The team had prepared to go to its first competition last year, but the pandemic cancelled the event. They remained committed and redesigned their rocket via online meetings.

“We had worked hard, put in so much time, and developed many new skills specifically to compete,” said club president and senior computer engineering major William Heine, of Florissant, Mo. “We had to go to the Argonia Cup to make it worth the effort.”

According to Heine, the team was in third place after launching its rocket, “Cherry Bomb.” To secure a podium spot, the students quickly reassembled the rocket to attempt a second launch, but unfortunately time ran out.

“It was sad that we couldn’t get the second launch in, but it was worth the effort,” said Heine. “Last year, our motto was Ex Cineribus Resurgemus, meaning ‘from the ashes we rise.’ This year, our motto is Dignitas Conatum, meaning ‘worth the effort.’ It speaks to the extra lengths our team members went through to continue designing and building with the added difficulty of COVID-19. The payoff of being able to compete was great.”

The team plans to return to the Argonia Cup in 2022. It intends to expand its scope to work on different projects, designs and builds outside of competitions.

“The organization’s leadership from inception to today needs to be recognized for making this success story happen,” added Karacal. “Despite the setbacks our organizations suffered due to the pandemic, this group managed to stay active and continued with their design and build activities. Their hard work resulted in such a great accomplishment, and the dean’s office will continue to support this team in the future.”

The SIUE School of Engineering is one of the largest engineering schools in the region. It offers comprehensive and affordable engineering programs with eight undergraduate degrees, five master’s degrees and two cooperative doctoral programs. 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. Students gain hands-on experience in the School’s state-of-the-art facilities, including the new Fowler Student Design Center.