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## Eight-story egg drop gives lesson in physics

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

A half-dozen Oakland University students tackled some physics problems from the top of the Science and Engineering Building on March 2 to help celebrate National Engineer's Week.

**Theta Tau**, the student chapter of the professional engineering fraternity, sponsored an "egg drop" as part of its National Engineer's Week celebration. Students were given the task of creating a compartment to protect an egg from breaking as it was dropped from the roof of the eight-story building. Available materials included cardboard boxes, packaging tape, bubble wrap, rubber bands, Styrofoam packing and newspapers. Participants received Frisbees, T-shirts and posters as prizes.

"This is a substantial task," said Associate Dean of Engineering and Computer Science Bhushan Bhatt, who witnessed the event from the SEB roof. "It's a challenging problem and a lesson in good engineering, particularly on a windy day like this. The amount of success depends upon the skills the students bring with them."

The students tried out a variety of designs – encasing an egg within newspaper and sealing it within a small box, suspending a wrapped egg using tape and rubber bands within an open-ended box, or just wrapping an egg in plain old bubble wrap. The success rate was marginally positive with lighter designs tending to keep the eggs intact. To keep his box from tipping during freefall, one student packed a physics book with the egg. The book was fine, the egg didn't fare so well. To make the task more challenging, Theta Tau President Lenny Golod wrapped three eggs in bubble wrap and packed them in a single box. Two of the three eggs remained intact.

"A 66-percent success rate isn't so bad," Golod said. "It's a lesson in physics, but it's also a good way to have fun."

### SUMMARY

A half-dozen Oakland University students tackled some physics problems from the top of the Science and Engineering Building on March 2. Theta Tau, the student chapter of the professional engineering fraternity, sponsored an "egg drop" as part of its National Engineer's Week celebration.

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