

Tuesday, June 8, 2010

Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition draws crowds to OU

With a focus on urging students toward new careers in robotics, the 18th Annual Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition (IGVC) took place June 4-7 at Oakland University. Co-hosted by the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC) and OU, the open-to-the-public competition featured a variety of outdoor robot challenges which apply classroom instruction and experimentation to real-world scenarios, environmental challenges and obstacles.

IGVC features high school and college robotics teams from around the world in exhibitions and competitions. At the end of the event, an awards ceremony recognized the best-of-the-best.

U.S. Army TARDEC Senior Research Scientist in Robotics Dr. Jim Overholt said that, for student competitors, IGVC can be a gateway into a career in robotics.

"From an Army perspective, we have about 8,000 robots currently operating in conflict areas," he said. "Having these students gather in southeastern Michigan gives us an opportunity to explain robotics career options to them both inside and outside of the military."

Overholt, an OU alum, participated in IGVC as a student. Now, as one of the Army's top robotics scientists, he oversees the TARDEC Joint Center for Robotics. TARDEC is the Department of Defense's (DOD's) focal point for ground robotics and unmanned ground systems.

For the 2010 robotics challenge, 58 university teams competed. The engineering students have been challenged to design autonomous vehicles and compete in a variety of unmanned mobility competitions.

Area teams include OU, the University of Detroit, the University of Michigan and Lawrence Technological University. National teams of note include California State, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Texas. The U.S. Navy is taking part, and, for an international flavor, the National University of Singapore will compete.

In addition to the universities, exhibitions from other TARDEC-supported robotics events thrilled crowds. High school teams from the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) competition competed against each other in a futuristic soccer match. In addition, high school teams from RoboFest competed in a debris removal scenario.

On Monday, June 7, a number of business and community leaders gathered to address the group.

Full event details can be found at igvc.org.

SUMMARY

The Annual Intelligent Ground Vehicle Competition was co-hosted by OU and the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center.

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