EcoCAR 2 Competition Electrifies University of Washington Team

Tyler Rose, Outreach Coordinator, UW EcoCAR 2 Team; posted by Chris Warner
The General Motors and US Department of Energy are sponsoring the EcoCAR 2 competition -- a challenge to develop green vehicle

technology and educate consumers on the importance of sustainability. Over the next three years, the University of Washington team will compete amongst 15 Universities from the United States and Canada to develop a plug-in hybrid vehicle power train for a donated 2013 Chevrolet Malibu; build a showroom quality vehicle; acquire local sponsors; and launch an exhaustive outreach program intended to educate consumers on green vehicle technology.

More than the build itself, student development -- taking our education and translating to a real-world application -- is the most valuable part of this competition. Over 23 years, 16,500 students have participated in various iterations of sponsored competitions. Ninety-eight percent of student participants go to work in the automotive or sustainability industries through our sponsors such as General Motors, the US Department of Energy, Bosch, Siemens, etc.

This is a long-term, very complex and challenging program. In the first year, we are laying the groundwork for the build to come. The engineering team is comprised of about 35 undergraduate students and led by several mechanical engineering graduate students. They are using hardware and software provided by sponsors like MathWorks to develop and simulate models for the potential vehicle. This is virtually the same process that General Motors' engineers go through to develop new cars. Establishing the best architecture possible with simulations will help us be successful down the road.

At the same time, the outreach team is generating a communications plan to focus our efforts on educating consumers on the importance of green technology and reduced emissions. This year, we will be attending trade shows and conferences, delivering presentations to K-12 students, and developing an online media presence. Consumers drive innovation, so it's important to spread the word. Of course, we will need to determine a plan to transfer information along as students come and go over life of the competition.

This multi-million dollar project is an exciting opportunity for the University of Washington, and we are very optimistic about our chances of succeeding in EcoCAR 2. With the UW's extensive background in environmental science and transportation technology, we are confident in our ability to excel in this competition. Future blog entries will follow our progress through the competition. We're glad you're along for the ride!

For more information, visit:
www.uwecocar2.com [1]
www.mathworks.com [1]
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