The Cornell Cup presented by Intel was a highly valuable experience for me. Skills I gained by attending the competition included improved communication, networking and the ability to work under extreme stress. At the competition we demonstrated the potential of our project in an expo. An advantage our project has is that it is interdisciplinary, meaning that it has something that everyone will understand and enjoy learning about. This also meant that I had to learn discern what topics interested the people who I was talking to and focus the discussion on those topics. For example, one of the professors from the system engineering program at Cornell University was very interested in my FPGA implementation, so I took the lead in the conversation with him by discussing the advantages, disadvantages and challenges of my implementation.

Another aspect of communication that I learned is when to let my teammates speak. I was the only one who knew the details of the computer systems at the competition so I got used to talking a lot, but when there was a question about a mechanical system, I learned to allow one of my teammates to respond because they are better informed about those systems.

Networking opportunities arose in the competition during the expo and during meals. Professors from Cornell provided me with ample information regarding their systems engineering program and I became acquainted with those professors and business professionals who took an interest in my work.

The most intense moment of stress that I had to overcome was the morning of the first expo. We were given two hours before the doors opened to the public and judging began. We had just that two hour window to set up and test the system. This left no time for debugging so we had to get it right the first time. We ended up with a demo that, while not quite complete, was still exciting and interesting for the judges and the public.