SERVE Grant Report: Cornell Cup 2014

The Cornell Cup presented by Intel is a senior engineering design competition for undergraduates. Our senior design group, team ETC designed an active suspension scheme that we mounted to a go-kart. We entered our project in the Cornell cup in October and were accepted as one of the 40 finalists for the competition.

Beginning on the evening of Wednesday, April 30 we flew out to Florida. The next day (Thursday 5/1) we spent picking up our project, which had been sent ahead via FedEx, and gather supplies for our demo. That evening there was a welcome ceremony, followed by a mingling time in which the contestants could get to know each other and their projects. The Cornell team was also present to demonstrate their (very impressive) projects, even though they are not eligible to compete in the spirit of fairness- a great overarching concern in the competition.

The Competition itself began bright and early on Friday morning at 5:00am, giving us time to set up before the events of the day began. Friday was a time for exposition, and the majority of the day was spent in an expo hall where each team had a booth to show off their project. Teams took turns wandering the floor, running their booths and judges moved about from team to team, seeing each project demonstrated. The expo continued to Saturday and was a wonderful time to build relations inside our team while we built up and manned our booth, and get to know members of other teams from other schools.

We also were able to spend time outside of class with one of our advisors, Dr. Bolding who was at the cup with us. It was a great opportunity to get to know him in a different setting while we ran our booth and in our free evenings. It was also very interesting to talk to the academic advisors from other teams as well, since they could provide great insight into each project, and even projects from past years!

Of course, the focus and main benefit of going to the final competition of the Cornell Cup, aside from the relationship building, was seeing all the projects. Even though we were competitors, there was still a great deal of camaraderie and genuine interest in each team’s project. It was amazing to see all the ideas that everyone came up with, it was very exciting for all of us to think about.

With the proliferation of sponsors in attendance at the event, such as Intel, Solidworks, Cornell Systems Engineering and more, I was able to make valuable connections for future job opportunities. There were also a number of speakers at the cup to talk about professional engineering development, career tracks and other very fascinating subjects.

Over all, it turns out the Cornell Cup is far more than just a competition; even though we did not win, it was a great opportunity to network, be academically stimulated, and begin to think about grad school and further career opportunities. I’m really thankful for the opportunity to go, and especially for SERVE Scholarship that allowed the trip to be possible!