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ASME places third in international design competition

The Tennessee Tech University American Society of Mechanical Engineers student team captured third place recently in the design competition at the 2016 ASME Student Professional Development Conference. Approximately 50 schools were represented from all over the world, with 300 students in attendance at Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta.

Every year the SPDC design competition challenge is different. During fall semester, prior to the competition, teams are given the rules and a problem statement they must solve. For this year's competition, the teams had to build a compact engineering system capable of launching a projectile, or paper airplane. Each team had to design, construct and operate a prototype before the annual competition in March.

Winners were determined by the total distance the planes flew divided by the exterior volume of a team's machine.

"We placed third in the competition but had the longest launch overall (30 feet)," said Josh Watkins, senior mechanical engineering major and ASME student chair.

The projects also had to include a poster, design detail and an oral presentation to the SPDC.

"Competitions like the SPDC help our students develop professionally and prepare them for their future careers," said Steven Canfield, mechanical engineering professor and team advisor.

While the 2016 ASME SPDC was held at Georgia Institute of Technology, Tennessee Tech plans to host next year's Student Professional Development Conference in March of 2017. The title of the conference will undergo a name change with future conferences being known as the ASME Engineering Festival.

Tennessee Tech College of Engineering offers ABET-accredited undergraduate programs, in chemical engineering, civil engineering, electrical engineering, computer engineering, mechanical engineering and computer science. At the graduate level, the college offers both master's degrees and a doctorate in engineering. Founded in 1915, Tech offers more than 40 bachelor and 20 graduate programs to nearly 11,000 students on its 252-acre central campus in Cookeville, Tennessee.

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