Cal Poly Auto Engineering Teams Race in Competition

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly's Society of Automotive Engineers not only design and build vehicles -- they also race them. Within the past month, students headed to Fontana, Portland, Ore., and Marshall, Mich., to race in Formula, Mini-Baja, and Supermileage auto competitions.

At the end of the three-day Formula car competition on June 17 in Fontana, Cal Poly had outperformed all other California schools and placed 12th overall, out of 70 entrants. The team also placed third in the skid pad division, fourth in design, and 11th in the endurance-economy.

Cal Poly was also the best California team in the Mini Baja contest in Portland. The Mustang automotive engineering team placed eighth overall out of 83 universities. The Cal Poly vehicle performed well in numerous competition events, including first in hill climb, third in acceleration, fifth in sales, eighth in endurance and 12th in cost.

The Cal Poly Supermileage Team competed for the first time in 20 years at the Eaton Corporation Marshall Proving Grounds in Marshall, Mich. On June 8-9, the Cal Poly students took sixth overall out of 22 teams. According to team leader Jason Kempenaar, the competition high point was the team finish in the fuel economy event: Cal Poly took sixth, with 861 miles per gallon.

"We were one of only two schools with a composite roll bar and monocoque chassis, which means the external skin supports the load, rather than an internal framework, like most vehicles," explained Kempenaar. "And we definitely turned heads with the quality of the lay-ups and the surface finish."

Each of the contests sponsored by the National Society of Automotive Engineers challenges teams to conceive, fabricate and compete with prototype vehicles in various static and dynamic events. The competitions test the knowledge, creativity, and imagination of the students. The student teams spend most of the year building their auto entries.

Editor's note: for jpgs of the team and competition car, e-mail Teresa Hendrix at thendrix@calpoly.edu.

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