Cal Poly Supermileage Team Goes Far on a Gallon of Gas at Shell Eco-marathon

SAN LUIS OBISPO – A multidisciplinary team of Cal Poly engineering students recently took their car out for a 1,210-mile spin – on a gallon of gas.

And they were not alone.

The Cal Poly Supermileage Vehicle Team competed with more than 1,100 students from 120 schools in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Brazil and Guatemala to design, build and drive the most energy-efficient vehicle possible.

Cal Poly's entry, the Lamina II, placed seventh in an elite pack of prototype cars that achieved 1,000 mpg or more at the Shell Eco-marathon Americas held April 5-7 in Houston.

A record-breaking distance of 3,500 mpg was achieved by Laval University from Canada; the Mater Dei team from Indiana placed second with 2,308 miles; and Cal Poly was among five other top contenders whose runs ranged from 1,210 to 1,451 mpg.

"Competitions like this really highlight our Learn by Doing approach," said team member Sean Michel. "It's rare for these top-ranking vehicles to have been entirely designed and built by students. It's not uncommon for other teams to outsource tasks such as manufacturing the windows and fairing (an aerodynamic shell). Ours is all done in house. Our multidisciplinary team definitely brings a good mix of know-how - in areas ranging from mold making and material strength to engines and technology."

Cal Poly team members included aeronautical engineering students Adriano Agostino, Chad Bickel, and Jason Schupp; computer engineering sophomore Aaron Gascoigne; materials engineering majors Dorian Capps, Ann Livingston-Peters, Finley Marbury and Kyle Savage; and mechanical engineering students Larry Huang, Sean Michel and Gabriel Mountjoy.

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