

Winners announced at MATE International Underwater Robotics Competition

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While only two teams emerged victorious at the MATE competition, it wasn't about winning, it was about the journey. Sixty-five teams from 19 countries took that journey and battled for top spots at the Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) and sister organization MATE Inspiration for Innovation (MATE II) Center's 17th annual international student underwater robotics competition June 21-23 at Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center in Federal Way, Washington. But Alexandria University and Macau Anglican College led the way.

Among all the teams that gathered to face off using their remotely operated vehicles (ROVs), Alexandria University's Vortex Titans from Egypt earned first place for the EXPLORER class and Macau Anglican College's Fish Logic from Macau took top honors in the RANGER class.

"Joining the MATE competition was a plot twist in my life. It was a new experience, seeing a lot of generations from different cultures and backgrounds. What brought them all together is the passion and willingness to learn. Winning a prize is not the real rewarding part. I am so proud to have such a great experience as a competitor and mentor," said Muhammad Tarek from Alexandria University.

"I think this was a perfect example of how students can amaze us in terms of their creativity, and exceeded our expectation. The MATE competition is a great opportunity for limits to be pushed and hidden talents to be found. Many of the members in my team are not academically the best students, but when they come to my workshop they are the brightest in the school," said Andy Tsui, mentor to the team from Macau Anglican College, Fish Logic.

This MATE competition highlighted the role ROVs play in supporting underwater archaeology, seismology and renewable energy activities in the Pacific Northwest. This year's theme—Jet City: Aircraft, Earthquakes and Energy—stemmed from the host state. Teams from K-12, community colleges and universities designed, built and tested underwater robots to complete specified, simulated, real-world ocean missions while working as a mock company to manufacture, market and sell their product, a.k.a. the ROV.

In addition to the competition, this year MATE added a secret mission for teams to earn bonus points. Inspired by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen's expedition to find the sunken *USS Indianapolis*, teams were challenged to collaborate and work together to piece together a puzzle of the *USS Indianapolis* at the bottom of the pool. Based on how much of the puzzle was assembled, teams earned points not only for themselves, but also for the other teams that contributed.

Despite students of different ages, genders and ethnicities competing, they all came together on this journey and collaborated for the sake of robotics and solving ocean-related challenges, making everyone a winner.

For more information and complete results, visit www.marinetech.org.

MATE Inspiration for Innovation (MATE II) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation whose mission is to inspire and challenge students to learn and apply scientific, engineering and technical skills. By providing real-world underwater problems to solve, MATE II inspires creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, entrepreneurship, and innovation. MATE II, along with its sister organization the MATE Center, organizes the MATE international Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) competition and manages the network of 31 (and growing) regional competitions that take place around the world and feed into the international event. To learn more, visit mateii.org.