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Ph: [\(831\) 646-3082](tel:8316463082)**NEWS RELEASE****Big Winners at 2017 International MATE Underwater Competition**

The focus was intense and competitive tension was high during the Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) Center's international underwater robotics competition (June 23-25).

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Student groups from around the world competed in this battle of skill and creativity. All-in-all, 65 teams from 17 countries participated, yielding a high level of competition. By the end of the third day, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and Watsonville Firefighters' Seal Team 1272 (California) each took first in their class, advanced (EXPLORER) and intermediate (RANGER), respectively. This is the first time both teams have won at the international level.

The student teams used their self-designed remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) in and around the Long Beach City College swimming pool. This year's competition highlighted the role ROVs play in securing the health and safety of today's seaports and how they'll impact future port cities. Students operated ROVs in simulated real-life scenarios such as cleaning up contaminated sediment and locating cargo that had fallen off container ships.

Judges from government, education, science, and industry evaluated each team on the ROVs design, construction and performance as well as the teams' ability to communicate what they learned and describe the development of their ROV. The mission complexity and vehicle design determined which class each group competed in (Explorer or Ranger). Other awarded categories included Guts and Glory (won by Dalhousie University from Canada and Eureka Tech Academy from Jordan), Safety Conscious (HKUST and California Academy of Math and Science), and Biggest Bang for the Buck (Garrett College from Maryland and Highlands Intermediate/Pearl City High School from Hawaii).

“The students’ technical skills and creativity always amaze me and surpass what I could ever imagine,” said Jill Zande, president of MATE Inspiration for Innovation (MATE II) and associate director and competition coordinator for MATE Center. “Their hard work and dedication to the project and the innovations they come up with to solve the tasks are inspiring. The teamwork, collaboration and community they create through their participation is so heartening given the world today. I know that our future technical and engineering workforce is in good hands. I look forward to their future accomplishments as they progress in their education and careers.”

The student groups will be back in action next summer for the next international competition, June 21-23, in Seattle, Washington.

For more information, visit www.marinetech.org and follow #MATE2017 on Twitter @matecenter.

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