

It all started when I joined the Engineering Robotics Team in first year. Our first challenge in the fall term was to construct a robot from a standard kit of parts in six weeks. Teams of 25 students or more are challenged to raise funds, gain sponsorships, build and program robots that compete in games.

Our team made history by becoming the first Western team to win the prestigious Regional Chairman's Award, which reserved us a spot at the World Championship in the Winter Term. The Chairman's Award is given to the team that demonstrates the greatest commitment to spreading passion about science and technology into the Community. Our team returned home from the competition empty-handed. Having experienced such success one term and then fail the next, I became determined. I vowed to bring the team back to the Championship event, so other team members could share the amazing experience I had.

To achieve this goal during my second year, I decided we needed to focus on recruiting sponsors and new mentors as well as building awareness in the Engineering Faculty and community. Our executive committee created a list of past and potential sponsors and divided the list amongst committee members. I made on-site sponsorship pitches to various local companies that helped us secure new sponsors. This was important because building a robot is expensive. A teammate and I demonstrated our robot at Western's Fall Preview Day to help kick off the 2018 Business Cares Food drive which was covered in the local media. This publicity introduced us to two people who volunteered to become our team's mentors.

The design and build of the robot require a high degree of teamwork with the coordination of many components. As the captain, I worked closely with the team's advisors and mentors to organize the project. One of my most important tasks was to provide direction and make sure the newer members of the team actually did some of the hands-on work. This allows new members to learn more and hopefully, stay with the team. I encouraged our first-year members to run for executive roles for the following year to ensure we have future leaders and more successful years to come.

So, how did we do? In the second year, we advanced to the World Championship in NYC and won the Engineering Inspiration award!