

## **XGR team competes against corporate cars in California race**

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A six-member Alfred University student team advised by a faculty member is set to race against entrants from corporate America this weekend in the 6th annual Extreme Green (Gravity) Race (EGR) in Lake Tahoe, CA. Professor Joseph Rosiczkowski, associate professor of mechanical engineering and program chairman, has worked with the students to perfect a gravity-powered car which will race Saturday, Sept. 29, on the Donner Pass Road in Norden, CA (Lake Tahoe region) against five corporate competitors and two other university teams. Racing begins at 10 a.m. (Pacific Daylight Time) and concludes by 1:45 p.m. with an awards ceremony scheduled at 2 p.m. EGR is the "Formula 1" of downhill racing. Each year, the exclusive competition features some of the world's most prestigious auto manufacturers and universities. This year's corporate participants include Bentley; Mazda; Aston Martin; Porsche Design; and Greenlight Financial Services, Irvine, CA. The University of California-Irvine and The Art Institutes (with 35 locations throughout the United States) join Alfred University as educational competitors. The AU team is hoping to improve upon last year's sixth-place finish in an 11-car field. The 2006 race was Alfred University's first. That two-man team raced against professional engineers from Honda, Chrysler, and Mazda. Stephen Peifer, mechanical engineering major, and Michael Hanes, materials science major, class of 2007, initiated the University's participation in extreme gravity-powered racing; it was Peifer who convinced EGR CEO Don MacAllister to allow collegiate teams to compete. "We started off thinking that we wanted to make the most professional Pine Hill Derby car ever," said Peifer, referring to the annual competition among AU engineering students to build cars for a race down Pine Hill. Soon they were looking beyond Pine Hill. We were putting a lot of time and money into the car, so we decided we wanted to be in a real race," said Peifer. He saw a New York Times article about Extreme Gravity Racing, and "that really sparked my interest." No college teams were competing in 2006. "I had to contact the race organizer and make the case to allow us to enter," said Peifer. Their sixth-place finish against the automakers caught the attention of other AU students. While still on campus last spring, Peifer turned the project into an official University club and assisted this year's racers in designing a new car which features the ability to adapt to different types of courses by changing wheels and brakes, a feature that, to date, no other EGR car has implemented. Peifer is currently employed by Dresser-Rand in Bethlehem, PA, but has returned to Alfred weekends to help with the design and fabrication of the new car. "It's a whole new car, a new design," although similar in looks to the vehicle he and Hanes built, Peifer said. "It's a lot more sophisticated, and we optimized the aerodynamics." The 2007 Alfred University XGR team includes: Andy Aylward, a senior from Oswego, NY; Jamie Lain '07, a graduate student from Canisteo, NY, who is working for Dresser-Rand; Karl Urban, a senior from the Bronx; NYS (??) resident Dave Vitulli, a senior; Elizabeth Larsen, a junior from Geneva, NY; and Joe Kovac, a senior. All are mechanical engineering majors. The club is actually about 12 members, including the team chosen to go to California for the competition. Students from Alfred State College's mechanical engineering technologies curriculum, as well as AU students, are participating in the club. Lain and his brother, Bill, are hauling the car across country in Lain's truck. The other team members are flying to California for this weekend's competition. Rosiczkowski earned a bachelor of science degree and a master of science degree in mechanical engineering, and a doctorate in engineering sciences, all from Clarkson University, Potsdam, NY.