

## **Alfred's gravity racer takes first against major automakers**

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A team of Alfred University Mechanical Engineering students and alumni challenged some of the largest automakers - and won - in the Extreme Green Race (XGR) in Lake Tahoe Sept. 29. The team built a gravity race car - a super version of the Pine Hill racers that AU engineering students have built for years - and entered the annual XGR race. It's the second year that an AU team has competed, becoming the first university in the country to enter the race against big automakers. This year, the AU team bested entries from Aston-Martin, Bentley and Mazda. The race was scheduled for the Donner Pass Road in Norden, CA (Lake Tahoe region) but snow on the mountainous road forced a change in plans, said Joe Kovac, a senior from Solvay, NY. "This year, because of the change in the course, they judged the entries not only on time, but on efficiency," said Kovac. Alfred's car finished the downhill portion of the course with the fastest time, and also won the efficiency piece as its momentum carried it the farthest on the uphill slope at the finish line. 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 included 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) joined Alfred University as educational competitors. The 2007 Alfred University XGR team included: 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; Dave Vitulli, a senior from Little Neck, NY; Elizabeth Larsen, a junior from Geneva, NY; and Joe Kovac, a senior from Solvay, as well as Stephen Peifer, a May '07 graduate who built the '06 car with Michael Hanes. Peifer is now working for Dresser-Rand in Bethlehem, PA. All are mechanical engineering majors. Bill Lain of Canisteo, Jamie's brother, also participated, helping to haul the AU entry across country and back. 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.