

College FIRST

Matthew Leese

mleese@gmail.com

Rochester Institute of Technology

Teams 340, 1567

Overview

□ Personal

- How can I be involved?
- Should I stay involved?
- What does it mean to be involved?

□ College

- How do I get my college involved?

□ Starting a Team

- How do I start a college sponsored team?

College FIRST Involvement

No
Involvement

Volunteer at
a Regional

Mentor a
Team

Run a
Team

Less
Involvement

Less
Work

Less
Responsibility

More
Involvement

More
Work

More
Responsibility

Volunteering at a Regional

- ❑ Requires 3 days of commitment
- ❑ Low stress
- ❑ Low work load
- ❑ Low responsibility
- ❑ Won't be disruptive to studies
- ❑ Keeps one involved in FRSI

Mentoring a Team

- 6+ week commitment
- Medium stress
- High work load
- High responsibility
- Can be disruptive to studies
- Involved in a similar way to high school

Running a Team

- Year long commitment
- Very high stress
- High workload
- Very high responsibility
- Can be very disruptive to studies
- High involvement but in a very different manner

Should I stay involved?

- Are you doing it for the right reason?
 - Do you want to be involved to build cool robots?
 - Do you want to be involved to mentor students?

- Do you have the time?
 - Will I be able to keep my commitment throughout the year?
 - Can I keep up with my school work?

Should I stay involved? (2)

- ❑ If the answer to either question is no, DON'T DO IT
- ❑ You can harm both yourself and others if you don't come into it with the right mindset

What if I'm not going into engineering?

- It doesn't matter
- There are plenty of things to do that aren't engineering
- You don't need to be an engineer to build a robot
- Example:
 - Three-fourths of the E-Board of RIT IIRSI are not engineers

From High School to College

- From Student to Mentor
- From Participant to Volunteer
- From Doer to Helper
- From Focus to Secondary Role

What does the role change mean?

- ❑ You're not the point of the program
- ❑ It isn't your robot
- ❑ It isn't your team
- ❑ It isn't your decision

Differences

- Team organization may be different than in high school
- Team culture may be different than in high school
- Team member culture may be different than in high school
- **Things will be different!**

The Key to a Successful Transition

- Remember that it's all about the students
- Things will be different
- Don't get discouraged
- Your ego isn't on the line

College Involvement in FIRST

- ❑ Not required for a student to stay involved
- ❑ Makes participation easier
- ❑ Provides more resources
- ❑ It's good for FIRST

College Involvement

- Many different ways colleges are involved with teams:
 - Be sole team sponsor (WPI)
 - Partially sponsor one team (Cornell)
 - Provide mentors to many teams (RIT)

Sole Team Sponsor

- ❑ Can be expensive
- ❑ Requires a large commitment from the College
- ❑ Unlikely to occur

Partial Team Sponsor

- Much less expensive
- Only requires some support from college
- Much easier to accomplish

Mentor Many Teams

- Requires a large number of local teams
- Particularly useful in areas with local regionals
- Requires a large commitment from college students

How should my college be involved?

- Depends on what kind of support you get from your college
- Depends on what kind of support you get from fellow students
- Easiest to be a partial sponsor of a single team

Where do I go from here?

1. Develop Support
2. Organize
3. Hold Meetings

Develop Support

- Recruit students
- Talk to your administration
- Talk to local teams
- Talk to your regional committee

Recruit Students

- ❑ Fellow students are your number one asset
- ❑ You can't do it all; you need help
- ❑ Makes you more credible
- ❑ Having some support makes it easier to get more support

Recruiting Students

- FIRST alumni are a good start
 - Usually experienced and energetic
 - Can be hamstrung by old ideas, old methods
- Get friends involved
- Old fashioned club recruitment
 - Fliers, signs, posters
 - Exhibitions
 - Events

Talking to Administration

- Talk as often as possible
- Talk to as many people as possible
- Keep talking even if they say no

Talking to Administration (2)

- Talk to
 - Professors
 - Appropriate Staff
 - Department Heads
 - Deans and Associate/Assistant Deans
- Find the key person
 - Frequently a Dean or Associate/Assistant Dean

Local Teams/Regional Committee

- ❑ May already have approached college
- ❑ Might know appropriate individuals
- ❑ May know interested schools
- ❑ May know interested sponsors
- ❑ Will (most likely) know the area better than you

Organization

- Many organizational structures work
 - It depends on your situation
- One key proactive person is needed
- A faculty sponsor is invaluable
- Being SG recognized may or may not be useful
- Email mailing lists are very useful

Meetings

- Holding regular meetings is vital
 - Find a meeting room
 - A faculty sponsor can help
 - Find a meeting time
 - Weeknights work best
- Have a meeting agenda
 - Send out the agenda before the meeting

Starting a Team

- Requires a lot of work and a lot of time
- Make sure you have help
- Start early

Overview of Starting a Team

- Organize your College
- Find a school
- Find a sponsor
- Organize your team
- Build a robot

Find a School

- Most colleges work with local high schools
 - Preexisting contacts are helpful
- Look to your regional committee for help finding schools
- Find some key teachers

Find a Sponsor

- ❑ This is one of the hardest parts of starting a team
- ❑ Your college may have established relationships with local companies
- ❑ Be careful not to work against your college's development office
- ❑ Your college may be able to provide some sponsorship money

Organize Your Team

- Utilize your teachers as much as possible
 - Let them organize the students
 - Get them to worry about administration
- Focus on building the robot
- Keep conflict away from the students
- Start with a small project early on
 - Play with the Rebovation kit

Build a Robot

- Keep it simple
 - Use the kit bot FIRST provides
 - Concentrate on simple mechanisms
- Keep the students involved as much as possible
- Don't expect the students to be as technically skilled as you may be
- Don't reject ideas just because someone is a FIRST rookie

College FIRST

□ Remember

- Have fun
- Your schoolwork is most important
- Do things that aren't FIRST
- Enjoy college

Resources

- Chief Delphi Forums
 - <http://www.chiefdelphi.com/forums>
- Collegiate FIRST
 - <http://www.collegiatefirst.org/>