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APRIL 20, 2020
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Cover designed by Mary Alice Bernal, Corporate Design.
Photo: Design Day, April 2019

Preface

On behalf of the School of Engineering, I would like to share the more than 50 engineering and computer science capstone design projects for 2020. We had capstone projects completed in partnership with sponsors including Nissan North America, NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, VUMC, Peabody, Booz Allen Hamilton, Cumberland River Compact, Nashville Civic Design Center, Merck, Inventiv Tools, DENSO Manufacturing Tennessee, and many more. We thank all of our project sponsors, advisors, and mentors for their support of our design teams and the whole program.

Senior design courses provide students with experience working on real-world projects that involve design constraints, budgets, reviews, and deadlines. Of course, none of the teams, sponsors, or the many other people involved knew last August how much the real world would change before these projects were completed. All these students, guides, sponsors, and mentors will remember the adaptability, perseverance, and hard work it took to continue collaborating from all corners of the globe.

Students learned about professionalism, teamwork, entrepreneurship, and, above all this year, resilience. As their projects take form, student teams interact with their industry and faculty advisers, hold meetings (perhaps more of them remotely this year), write formal documentation and present their work. By the end of the academic year, the teams produce design processes, systems, prototypes, simulations, or virtual demonstrations.

This book is one tangible representation of Design Day, which has always been a celebration of all the lessons learned over four years of undergraduate engineering education. As you read this book, know those lessons were learned and demonstrated throughout all these projects.

We recognize the value of senior projects mentored and supported by external advisors: industry representatives, entrepreneurs, non-profit mentors, as well as research and clinical faculty. This experience allows you to work closely with Vanderbilt engineering seniors and discover what makes our students stand out among other applicants when it comes to employment and postgraduate study. If you or your colleagues are interested in mentoring or sponsoring a project or want to learn more, please contact me.

Be resilient, persevere, and work hard to make each other's world a little better each day. We are grateful for your support and guidance of our next generation of engineers and scientists.

With gratitude,

Thomas J. Withrow
Assistant Dean for Design
Associate Professor of the Practice of Mechanical Engineering
514 Olin Hall
615.322.3594
thomas.j.withrow@vanderbilt.edu

Contents

BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

TEAM
Adriana Calderón Acón, BME
Hannah Kilpatrick, BME
Ariel Thorson, BME
Journey White, BME

ADVISER
Professor Todd Giorgio, BME

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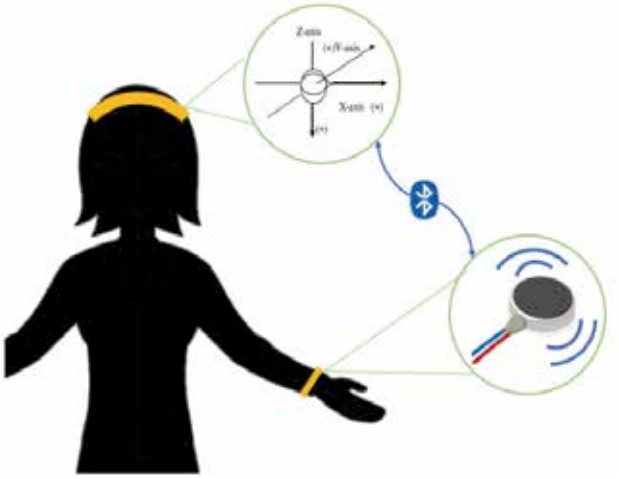
Device for detection and alert of tremors

Complex motor stereotypies are characterized by episodes of unconscious repetitive movement of the head, hands or arms. Usually, these episodes can be stopped using auditory or tactile stimulation. While these tremors are not fatal, this condition has real consequences of social stigma and isolation. Alternative methods of treatment include behavioral therapy and anti-psychotic medications, but these have proven to have little effect and can be expensive. Our goal is to develop a detection and alert device to mitigate the frequency of episodes. The device has two components: a headband component for tremor detection and a vibrating wristband component to alert the user of an oncoming tremor. The device is discreet, cost effective, and able to recognize a pattern of motion. It can detect and alert an individual of a stereotypy event in 5 seconds and record the duration, intensity and frequency of those events, providing useful data.



The stereotypy-tracking device consists of headband and wristband components. An inertial measurement unit in the headband detects a tremor by comparing incoming signals with a pre-recorded tremor signal. The wristband component receives a message via Bluetooth that causes it to vibrate, using tactile stimuli to alert the patient.

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BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

TEAM
Justin Cruz, BME
Katie Henderson, BME
John Kerr, EE/BME
Noah Mallory, BME

ADVISER
Kaitlyn Johnston Minchin, MS, CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist

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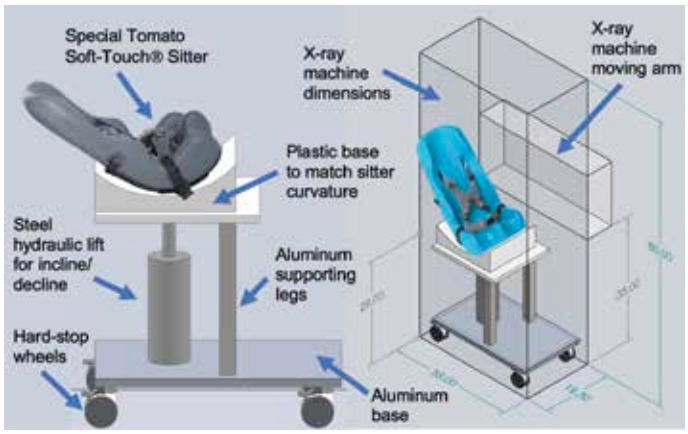
Positioning system for pediatric videofluoroscopic swallow studies

At Vanderbilt Children's Hospital, videofluoroscopic swallow studies are performed regularly to identify a patient's specific risks while swallowing. Studies are performed by taking X-rays in real time while the patient swallows liquids/foods mixed with barium. The current positioning system used for these studies is both unstable and incompatible with the surrounding medical equipment. Specifically, the current design cannot accommodate children in the age range of 5 to 15. Our team designed a seating system that can support a patient up to 200 pounds and incorporates characteristics that facilitate the work of the clinicians. The chair is designed with a robust aluminum frame for support and incorporates a hydraulic lift to recline the chair while the patient is seated. Most importantly, the chair will fit within the parameters of the X-ray machine as most current seating systems do not fit or fail to place the child in the X-ray field of view.



The chair fits the narrow X-ray machine dimensions and includes an aluminum base, hard-stop wheels, a steel hydraulic lift for incline/ decline, aluminum supporting legs, and a plastic base designed to match the curvature of all three Special Tomato Soft-Touch Sitters.

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TEAM
Sophia Drozdz, BME
Antonio Glenn, BME
Connor Krolak, EE/BME
Danielle Liu, BME

ADVISER
John A. Curci, M.D., Department of Vascular Surgery

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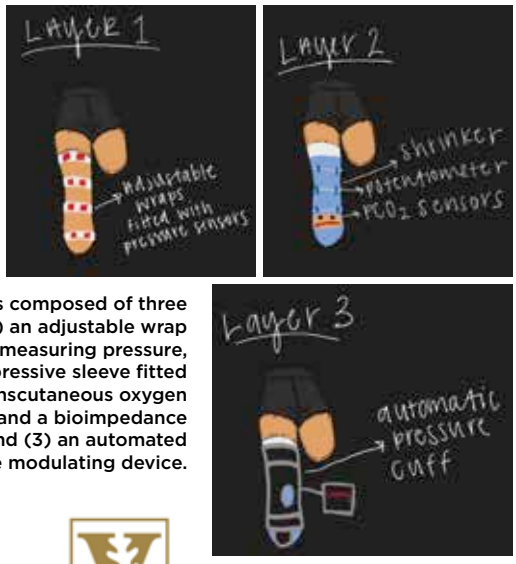
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Smart shrinker: improving wound healing in lower limb amputees

Peripheral artery disease affects more than 8.5 million people in the United States alone. If left untreated, severe lack of blood flow to tissue can lead to ischemia and eventually amputation. This amputation causes edema (fluid accumulation), which increases the time needed for the wound to heal enough for a prosthetic to fit. The objective of this project is to significantly improve treatment of edema in lower leg amputees. Using pressure sleeves and Ace wraps to the limb stump does not account for the careful pressure balance required for treating edema. Accurate edema control requires a balance of applying just the right amount of pressure to the limb stump to increase blood perfusion to the wound without causing tissue necrosis and delayed healing. We designed a smart external limb sleeve that automatically applies or reduces compression based on limb volume and skin perfusion sensor readings. This novel medical device can actively control edema in the leg and ensure adequate wound healing immediately after lower leg amputation.



The device is composed of three layers: (1) an adjustable wrap capable of measuring pressure, (2) a compressive sleeve fitted with transcutaneous oxygen sensors and a bioimpedance board, and (3) an automated pressure modulating device.

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TEAM
Kacie Breeding, BME
Kendall Derry, BME
Harrison Thomas, BME

ADVISER
Jeffrey Martus, M.D., M.S, Department of Pediatrics

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BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Pediatric bone clamp based on 3D MRI/CT elbow models

The second most common pediatric elbow fracture involves the lateral condyle of the distal humerus. For fracture surgery, a bone clamp is often very helpful to maintain the reduction as internal fixation is placed. Currently, no ideal bone reduction forcep has been designed specifically for pediatric lateral condyle fractures. Our goal is two-fold: develop a bone reduction forcep to fit the unique osseous anatomy of the lateral condyle of pediatric patients between ages 2-18, and design the forcep body to have a 90-degree angle to facilitate rotation of the arm for a lateral fluoroscopic view during the procedure. The team designed a bone clamp based on 3D models built from MRI scans of pediatric elbows. The pointed tines of the forcep are angulated in different directions: one tine grasps a 2-mm pin placed in the middle of the distal humerus, while the other tine holds the fractured fragment in the correct position for pin fixation. An appropriately scaled ratcheting mechanism eliminates the need for different-sized clamps to accommodate age ranges. This surgical device is the first of its kind to address the challenges of pediatric lateral condyle fracture repair.

The bone reduction forcep boasts asymmetrical tines: one for grasping an externally fixed pin and the other for stabilizing the fractured lateral condyle fragment of the distal humerus.

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BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

TEAM
Kevin Lazenby, BME
Allen Luna, BME
Dalton Nelson, BME
William Pace, BME
Akshar Patel, BME

ADVISERS
Eric Gamazon, Ph.D., MS, Department of Medicine
Sandra Zinkel, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Medicine

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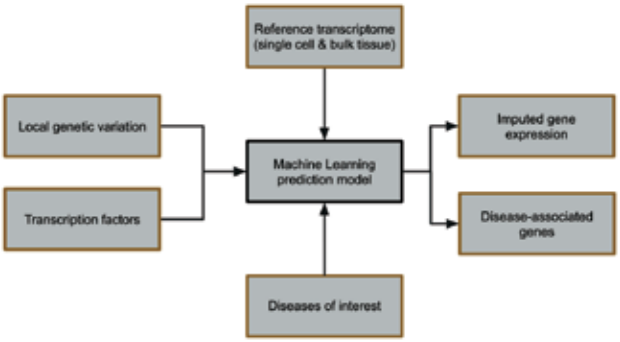
Department of Anesthesiology, VUMC

Machine learning framework for data integration in genomics and precision medicine

Our project optimizes existing machine learning methods to integrate high-dimensional genomic and transcriptomic data sets to better model and predict disease. The optimized prediction model incorporates both local genetic variation and transcription factors as an input to improve its estimation of gene expression and identification of disease-associated genes. The team performed several quality control analyses to identify the minimum set of relevant transcription factors to improve the model's performance. These analyses included identification of highly variable genes, construction of gene communities using the Leiden algorithm, estimation of RNA velocity, and others. After identifying a set of relevant transcription factors, the prediction model's performance will be illustrated by applying it to hematological disease studies. The team relied on ACCRE, Vanderbilt's high-performance computing cluster, to carry out computational methods, and we accessed electronic health data from Vanderbilt's biobank, BioVU. We expect our method to identify novel genes implicated in the etiology of hematological disorders.



Adding transcription factors (i.e. a biologically meaningful selection of global genetic variation) as an input is expected to improve the model's estimation of gene expression and identification of disease-associated genes.

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BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

TEAM
Abigail Ayers, BME
Rhett Britton, BME
Clare Broderick, BME
John Lee, BME
Joshua Meyer, BME

ADVISERS
Professor John P. Wikswo, Vanderbilt Institute for Integrative Biosystems Research and Education
Ann Richmond, PhD, Department of Pharmacology
Caroline Nebhan, MD, PhD, Department of Medicine

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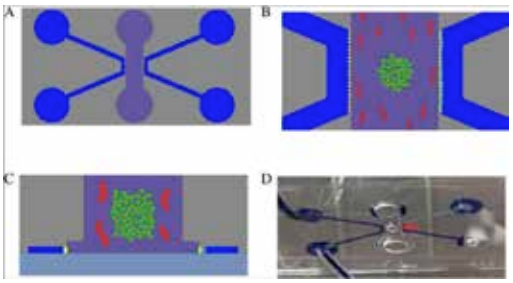
Microfluidic bioreactor for testing chemotherapeutics on an organoid co-culture system

The tumor-immune microenvironment plays an essential role in cancer growth and metastasis. However, current approaches to preclinical cancer research have significant disadvantages in replicating the complexity of the tumor-immune microenvironment. A preclinical model is needed that more accurately capitulates the three-dimensional human physiological system. A microfluidic bioreactor allows for controlled perfusion of a three-dimensional extracellular matrix, high-throughput experimentation and specific regulation of variables. It mimics the complexity and specificity of human systems and presents the opportunity to study the three-dimensional tumor-immune microenvironment. The device consists of two side channels for flow of media, cells, and drug(s) as well as a center channel that holds the tumor organoid and extracellular matrix. The system utilizes a syringe pump to achieve steady, laminar flow for long-term study. The team aims to implement a standardized, effective method for cell delivery to the center of the device and a stable microenvironment that includes a semipermeable endothelial monolayer through which leukocytes, media, and drug(s) may pass. This project establishes a system with the potential to transform approaches to cancer treatment by permitting high-throughput, patient-specific drug viability testing.



The microfluidic "Road Kill" bioreactor includes two inlet side channels and one center channel. A row of microposts, on which an endothelial cell monolayer grows, separates the side and center channels on both sides. The side channels allow flow of immune cells, media and investigational drug(s) or drug combinations, while the center channel holds extracellular matrix. A patient-derived tumor organoid is loaded into the center channel through a top port to stimulate the seed-soil interactions within the tumor-immune microenvironment.

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TEAM
Jude Franklin, BME
Anthony Frederick, BME
Chet Friday, BME
Justin Mollison, BME
Gregory Ridgel, BME/ Spanish

ADVISERS
Professor Franz Baudenbacher, BME
Susan Eagle, M.D., Department of Anesthesiology

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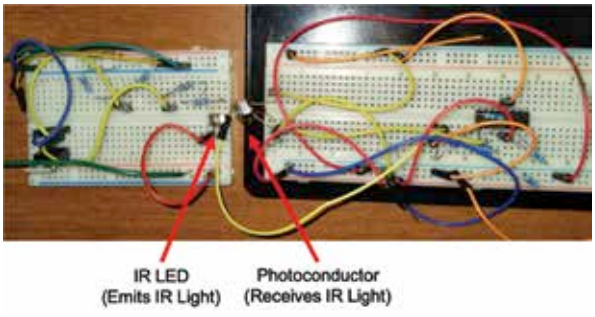
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

NICOLAS: non-invasive continuous optical lactic acid sensor

The non-invasive continuous optical lactic acid sensor is a smart sensing modality developed for continuous, noninvasive blood lactate level monitoring in clinical settings. It will be a significant improvement over the current clinical standard of intermittent blood draws for sampling. Our device samples lactate levels continuously and noninvasively and is less resource-intensive. Our sensor uses near infrared spectroscopy (NIRS) and ratiometric analyses to detect fluctuations in blood lactate relative to an established baseline. It will alert healthcare professionals to rapid spikes that may occur due to sepsis, organ failure or hemorrhage. Using blood lactate level as an early indicator of severe complications, NICOLAS allows for earlier intervention, which could result in improved patient outcomes.



The circuit shows the IR LED-photoconductor system that is the basis for NICOLAS. Using this circuit, we will be able to determine optically the concentration of lactate in a patient's blood.

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TEAM
Michelle Fu, BME
Tanner Hoppman, BME
Morgan Kinney, BME

ADVISERS
Joseph Schlesinger, M.D., Department of Anesthesiology
Joshua Shive, Tennessee State University

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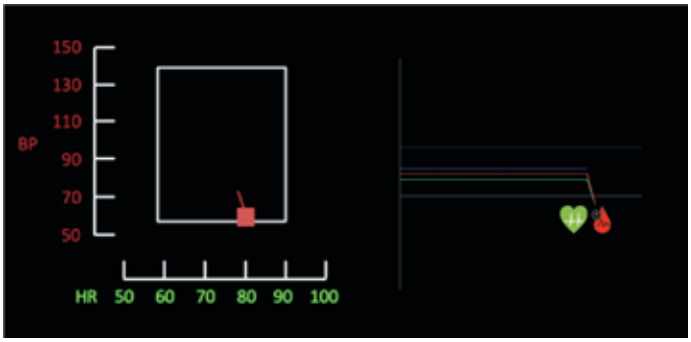
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Multisensory medical alarms

An excessive number of disruptive, uninformative false alarms in hospital ICUs causes alarm fatigue in clinicians and can negatively impact patient recovery. Alarm fatigue is the desensitization to alerts, which can lead to missed alarms and compromised patient safety. Our team developed a wearable medical device with an intuitive visual icon display that keeps a doctor informed of patient vital sign trends before an alarm threshold is met. The goal is to decrease the number of audible alarms and increase awareness of changes in oxygen saturation, heart rate, and blood pressure. We compared two novel visual displays and measured the accuracy and response time of participants in monitoring patient vital signs. The advantage of a wearable device is that it is within a doctor's line of site and reports information on trends of patient vital signs in the recent past. The aim is to significantly decrease response time and promote faster recognition of vital signs, allowing healthcare workers to respond more appropriately.



Our study compared the effectiveness of a configural visual display (left) and a visual icon display (right) in communicating dangerous trends in patient vital signs before they hit an alarm threshold as well as the benefits of the visual icon display integrated onto a wearable device.

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BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

TEAM
Sophie Baillargeon, BME
Michael Kann, BME/Econ/Math
Gopi Rao, BME
Evan Rothchild, BME/Math
Tejas Subramanian, BME

ADVISERS
Stephen Paul Gondek, M.D., M.P.H., Trauma and Surgical Critical Care
Bradley Matthew Dennis, M.D., Trauma and Surgical Critical Care

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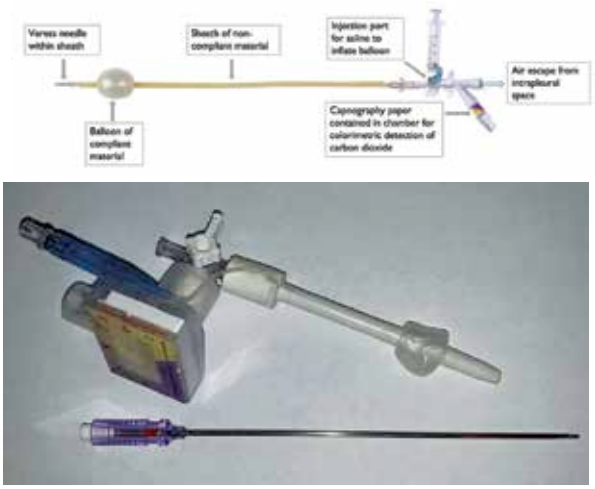
Novel needle decompression system for tension pneumothorax

Tension pneumothorax is a condition where the air in the peritoneal space escapes into the interpleural space resulting in increased pressure on the lung and eventual collapse.

As the lungs' outerplural membrane expands, it pushes on the heart and causes a systemic decrease in blood pressure. It is a deadly complication that normally arises post trauma and has few effective treatment options. The premier treatment, needle decompression, lacks the ability to detect success, and it can destabilized during transit, which can result in fatal complications. To address those problems, our design is a novel needle decompression system that uses a balloon catheter to stabilize the needle, a capnography device to detect the high carbon-dioxide levels characteristic of air in the pleural space, and a veress needle for physical feedback for emergency responders to feel entrance to the pleural space. This device builds upon a previous iteration while maintaining the classic "feel" of standard systems. The team hopes to scale down the prototype to standard decompression system size and test on mannequins, animal models and cadavers.



The needle decompression system includes CO2 capnography for visual placement detection, a veress needle for physical feedback of placement detection, and a balloon catheter for stability during transit.

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BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

TEAM
Jorie Budzikowski, BME
Stephanie Molitor, BME
Maddy Schmall, BME
Katy Ufford, BME
Rachel Welscott, BME

ADVISER
Leon Dupree Hatch III, M.D., Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

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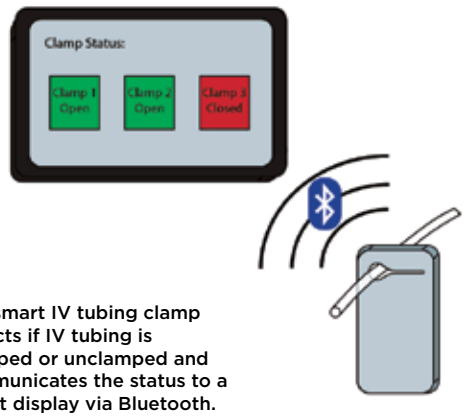
Smart IV tubing clamp for the NICU

This smart clamp fulfills a need in the NICU for automatic detection of the status of IV tubing clamps, as the current systems are not sensitive enough at the low drip rates used to detect accidental occlusions. The design consists of a physical clamp to occlude medication flow when intended, as well as a "smart" electronic circuit that detects if the IV tubing is in the open or closed state. When the tubing is clamped, the tube triggers a digital switch, changing the voltage input to a battery-powered microcontroller within the clamp housing. If the tubing is in the clamped state, an LED on the clamp will light up and the status will be updated on a tablet display. This is an improvement over the current design because the clamp status is detected automatically. We anticipate this design will shorten protocols, reduce medical provider error, and improve the delivery of high-risk medications in the NICU.



The smart IV tubing clamp detects if IV tubing is clamped or unclamped and communicates the status to a tablet display via Bluetooth.

Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt

TEAM
Matthew Blaize, EE/BME
Elyssa Edgeton, BME
Cerie Ock, BME
Kristina Pieterson, BME

ADVISER
Rajnish Gupta, M.D., Department of Anesthesiology

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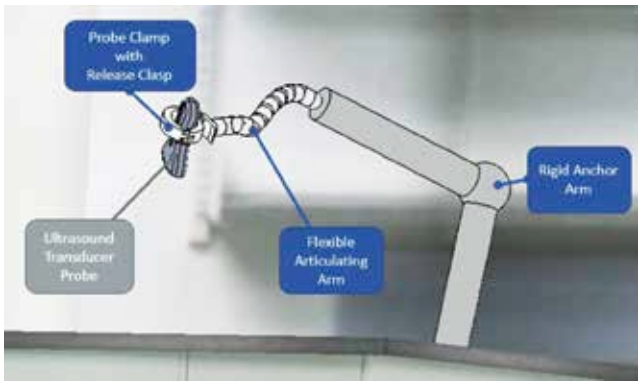
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Mechanical articulating ultrasound probe arm

Ultrasound guidance is popular in a range of surgical procedures to localize anatomical structures in real time. The goal of our project is to develop a device that enhances ultrasound probe actuation for hands-free operation and improves imaging quality. Our design is a completely mechanical, non-electrical solution that can be easily adjusted during procedures. A rigid arm clamps securely to bed rails and can be adjusted with three degrees of freedom before being locked into place. A flexible arm connects to the rigid section and is comprised of links. This portion locks securely in place when desired and can adjust with two millimeters of precision. The rigid arm provides initial large-scale ultrasound probe movement while the flexible arm provides small-scale adjustments during the procedure. The final component is a clamp that can hold a variety of ultrasound probes securely to the repositionable section. This design will help improve imaging and procedural accuracy and decrease the need for additional surgical personnel.



3D model of the ultrasound probe arm designed in AutoDesk Fusion 360™. The arm has three main components: a rigid arm, a flexible articulating arm, and a grip. The rigid arm is used to anchor the device and provide rough positioning. The flexible arm provides more fine-tuned positioning with the aid of a release clasp.

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TEAM
Ganesh Aruna, BME
Yuelin Deng, EE/BME
Kevin Derby, BME
Emily Dong, CompE
Barrett Fix, BME
Conner Vastola, BME

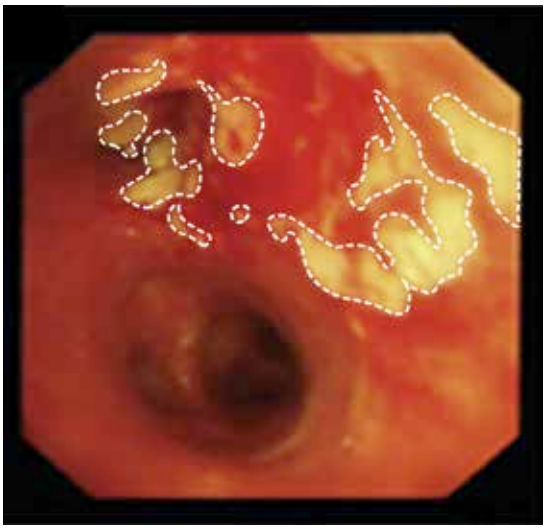
ADVISER
Claire Spradling, M.D., Department of Anesthesiology

SPONSOR
Vanderbilt University Medical Center

BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

Low-resource bronchoscope

There is significant demand for healthcare services in low-income countries where respiratory diseases such as tuberculosis remain huge challenges. Currently, sputum sample tests are used to diagnose TB in low-income areas. However, TB patients are frequently unable to produce sputum of sufficient volume or quality. Bronchoscopy can be used to extract sputum at the suspected source of infection, significantly increasing both specificity and sensitivity. Unfortunately, bronchoscopy is difficult to perform in low-income areas due to high cost and difficulty of operation. We aim to develop a low-resource bronchoscope that is cost effective and easy to use by non-professionals to aid in point-of-care diagnostics. Our instrument consists of a reusable probe body, a single-use sheath to avoid reprocessing costs, an intuitive control scheme and companion application for real-time video display, and image processing to further aid clinical decision making.



Example of a proposed output image with a real-time feature recognition of inflamed tissue relayed from the bronchoscope and displayed using a companion device.

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CHEMICAL AND BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

TEAM
Joseph Alejo, ChemE
David Blum, ChemE
Xinyi He, ChemE
Jonah Levine, ChemE
Thomas Lowell, ChemE

ADVISERS
Professor Russell Dunn, P.E., ChBE
Professor Bryan Beyer, ChBE
Professor Scott Guelcher, ChBE
Bryan Babcock, consultant

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Design of a microbrewery for diverse product manufacturing

The last ten years have seen a sharp uptick in the number of craft breweries in the United States along with an increase in both the volume and dollar shares of the craft brewing category of the beer market. Our group targeted this growing market by designing and evaluating the economic viability of a new craft brewery. We designed a large-scale craft brewery—Crispy Hoppin' Brewing Enterprise—to produce 100,000 barrels per year of 13 different beers. The brewery produces five varieties year-round, as well as four seasonal and four limited edition brews. In addition to reaching this volume production, we designed our brewery to be environmentally friendly and energy efficient. We wrote original recipes for each of the beers, performed a detailed economic study on both raw material and equipment costs, and determined the specifics of building or contracting a facility. Throughout the design process, we attempted home brewing and met with Nashville craft brewery owners and brewmasters to learn about their operations.

An example of typical brewing equipment used to produce craft beer.

CHEMICAL AND BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

TEAM
Andrew Feitel, ChemE
Jonah Jordening, ChemE
Jack Larson, ChemE
Julian Ramos, ChemE
Samuel White, ChemE

ADVISERS
Professor Russell Dunn, P.E., ChBE
Professor Bryan Beyer, ChBE
Professor Scott Guelcher, ChBE
Bryan Babcock, consultant

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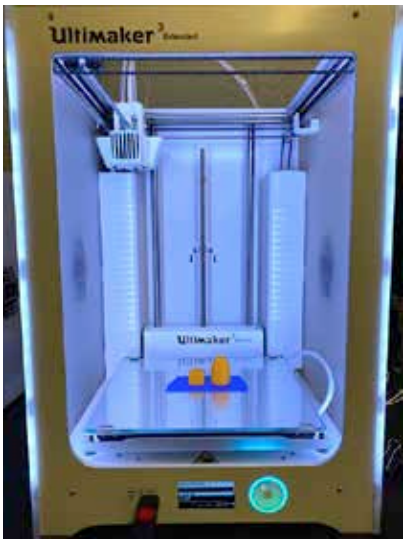
3D printing in chemical engineering applications

Every year, more than 30,000 adults and children are brought to emergency rooms for losing one or more fingers. Currently, there are hundreds of prosthetic designs that rely on 3D printing. However, a cheap design with interchangeable parts that meets the needs of everyday life does not yet exist. Our project compiled documentation for printing and extruding various polymers, developed custom polymer blends as needed, and designed a modular, novel 3D-printed prosthetic finger that meets the needs of any user. This platform for our design allows rapid production of fitted and functional prosthetic fingers. Some of the needs we addressed include the ability to effectively use touch screens, throw a football consistently, and dexterity in piano playing. Polymer blends were created using the extrusion system and tested in 3D printers.



Rapid prototyping with 3D printers is a key capability in custom made prosthetics. This leads to a more accessible prosthetics due to lower costs and shorter time to optimization.

TEAM

Benjamin Evers, ChemE
Ward Rushton, ChemE
Samuel Wiener, ChemE
Alexey Zaytsev, ChemE

ADVISERS

Professor Russell Dunn, P.E., ChBE
Professor Bryan Beyer, ChBE
Professor Scott Guelcher, ChBE
Tony Davis, consultant

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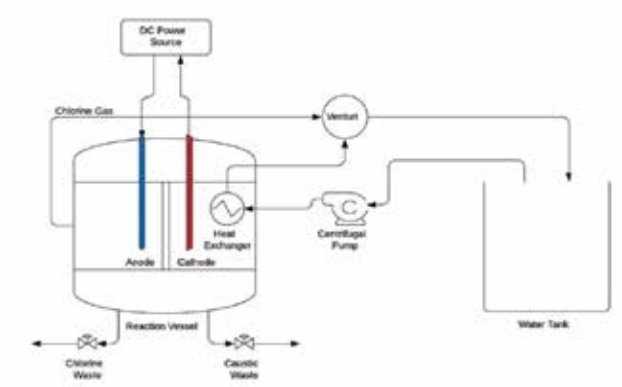
CHEMICAL AND BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

Development of a lab-scale chlor-alkali process

The chlor-alkali process is a very important process that creates two common chemical building blocks—free chlorine and caustic soda. Our project focuses on chlorine production with the intent of disinfecting water for drinking. We modeled the kinetics of the process under different conditions in order to reduce the required power for effective ion separation. Additionally, modification of the reactor to run the process in a semi-continuous method could yield greater amounts of chlorine for disinfecting during a given time period by reducing reactor turnover time. After experimentally determining the parameters of our reactor, we can run the reactor closer to ideal operation in the field and allow for theoretical scale-up by using significant calculated values such as current density and polarization voltage. The data provided by this project will help provide accessible and clean drinking water to disadvantaged communities all around the world.



The lab-scale chlor-alkali process uses saltwater and a semipermeable membrane to electrochemically clean water via production of chlorine.

TEAM

Dinh Chuong (Ben) Nguyen, ChemE
Elisabeth Riska, ChemE
Andrew Whitten, ChemE

ADVISERS

Professor Russell Dunn, P.E., ChBE
Professor Bryan Beyer, ChBE
Professor Scott Guelcher, ChBE
Aayush Gupta, consultant
Timothy Bassler, Ph.D., consultant

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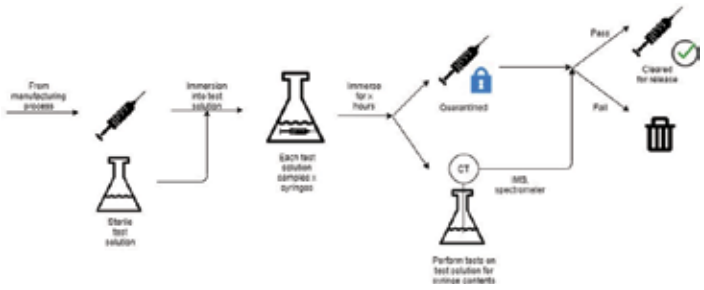
CHEMICAL AND BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

CCIT for alum and non-alum containing pre-filled syringes

Container closure integrity testing (CCIT) is a crucial quality-control test for drug products. CCIT evaluates the ability of a drug container to protect its contents against external contamination and is required by regulatory agencies. Vacuum decay testing is the current industry standard that is a proven method for many vaccines in vial form. However, the pharmaceutical industry is trending toward single-use pre-filled vaccines, which is incompatible with vacuum decay testing. Therefore, it was desirable to design a novel CCIT method for these products. The primary project objective was to determine and develop a CCIT method that is suitable for pre-filled vaccines, which may contain alum, a common additive. Other objectives included a regulatory overview, design feasibility testing, risk assessment and cost evaluations in order to propose a viable CCIT method. The team developed two novel methods, thermal defect imaging and external solution sampling, that can solve the problem in a low-cost, high-throughput manner. The team conducted proof-of-concept experiments to establish the risk and feasibility of the proposed methods. After determining a suitable method, the team performed a comprehensive cost analysis and provided an official recommendation for a proposed CCIT method.



Schematic of external solution sampling. The vaccine is placed in a test solution to determine if any vaccine content leaks into the solution, which would indicate compromised sterility. The solution can be analyzed by various methods, such as ion mobility spectrometry or UV-Vis spectroscopy.

CHEMICAL AND BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

TEAM
Katie Jones, ChemE
Jordan Justice, ChemE
Katrina Luo, ChemE
Christopher Walding, ChemE

ADVISERS
Professor Russell Dunn, P.E., ChBE
Professor Bryan Beyer, ChBE
Professor Scott Guelcher, ChBE
Justin Corney, consultant
Crystal Loehman, consultant

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Heat integration design of a PVC plant

Chemical plants spend significant revenue every year on utilities, typically for production of steam and cooling water. These utilities are used to heat or cool streams to desired temperatures for operation. However, many plant designs neglect the heating and cooling ability of already existing streams, which can be integrated. By integrating existing sources of energy, the facility can continuously save on operating costs while simultaneously lowering its water and energy usage. Using heat integration network technology, our team designed a network of heat exchangers to minimize utility costs at one of several plants within a pre-existing polyvinyl chloride (PVC) synthesis facility. This design accounts for the economic benefit of integrating streams while also considering possible new safety complications.

Aerial view of a chemical production facility. Our team aimed to optimize a polyvinyl chloride synthesis facility to minimize its utility expenses.

CHEMICAL AND BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

TEAM
Riley Knight, ChemE/Span
Caroline Powers, ChemE
Annie Timbers, ChemE
Abby Weiss, ChemE

ADVISERS
Professor Russell Dunn, P.E., ChBE
Professor Bryan Beyer, ChBE
Professor Scott Guelcher, ChBE
Justin Corney, consultant
Crystal Loehman, consultant

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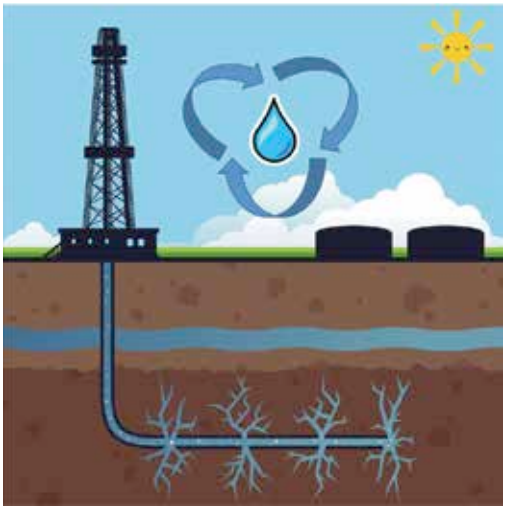
Mobile wastewater treatment system for hydraulic fracturing waste

Hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking," continues to grow as a method to extract natural gas from shale formations. Millions of gallons of water, along with sand and injection fluid additives, are injected into the ground to generate fissures to release the natural gas. After the initial injection, around 20% of the original fluid returns to the surface over the course of two weeks as flowback water. The primary goal of this project is to reduce the water burden of the hydraulic fracturing process by cleaning flowback water for re-use. Our team aims to design a system to treat around 15% of the original volume of water injected after it returns to the surface by removing toxic chemicals, dissolved salts, and radioactive compounds from flowback water. Water will be treated in three phases: a primary phase to remove organic components and oil, a secondary phase to remove metal cations, and a tertiary phase to remove dissolved solids. The treated water can be recombined with fresh fracking fluid to be re-injected into a new well.



To reduce the water burden of hydraulic fracturing, wastewater will be treated after it returns to the surface for reuse as injection fluid.

TEAM
Kelly Carr, ChemE
James Dohm, ChemE
Avi Gargye, ChemE
Kyra Owensby, ChemE

ADVISERS
Professor Russell Dunn, P.E., ChBE
Professor Bryan Beyer, ChBE
Professor Scott Guelcher, ChBE
Alan Crawford, consultant
David Steckler, consultant

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CHEMICAL AND BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

Batteries to meet Vanderbilt University's renewable energy goals

During the day, batteries store power generated by solar panels; at night, they discharge that power back to the electrical grid.

Climate change has pushed many organizations to begin implementing renewable energy technologies. Accordingly, Vanderbilt University recently announced its goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 [FutureVU] and is planning to install solar panels on campus. However, many renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, are intermittent, meaning that energy production can be unreliable. This factor severely limits renewable energy's integration with the electric grid. One solution is developing large-capacity batteries so that excess energy renewables generated during active periods can be stored for later use. Currently, lithium-ion batteries are commercially available but they face poor lifetimes and are difficult to implement on a large scale. Redox flow batteries (RFBs), on the other hand, are an emerging technology that can mitigate these concerns and be easily controlled for various energy and power requirements. Our project is an academic study to determine how to implement redox flow batteries for energy storage as part of the FutureVU initiative. We designed and modeled a system of vanadium-based RFBs to store energy generated by rooftop solar panels. Additionally, our team conducted performance, cost, and safety analyses to optimize our design before providing recommendations to Vanderbilt administration and faculty members.

TEAM
Michael Barkan, ChemE
Benjamin Hunter, ChemE
Emma Joseph, ChemE

ADVISERS
Professor Russell Dunn, P.E. ChBE
Professor Bryan Beyer, ChBE
Professor Scott Guelcher, ChBE
Alan Crawford, consultant
David Steckler, consultant

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CHEMICAL AND BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

Industrial applications of virtual reality in chemical engineering

Oculus Rift S user portrayed in a functional simulated oil refinery environment created in Unity.

This team seeks to apply the groundbreaking technology of virtual reality to chemical engineering education and training with situational process safety modules. Functional environments were created in the Unity development platform alongside Oculus hardware and software to simulate realistic scenes in which the user must seek out, analyze, and act upon a hazard, immediate risk, or lapse of process safety. These modules aspire to create hands-on learning experiences for the Vanderbilt chemical engineering department where previously discussed safety topics can be simulated in live action. The modules follow a linear progression: the user must use knowledge from previous stages to solve or prevent hazards in future stages. Within each stage, the team implements custom packages and assets in Unity to simulate technical laboratory equipment such as pipe and valve systems, fluid pumps, chemical reactors, distillation columns and filtration systems. This equipment will be incorporated into the virtual reality process safety module system to allow students to gain situational awareness.

CHEMICAL AND BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

TEAM
Jacqueline Lavin, ChemE
Andrew Weinstein, ChemE
Mary Helen Wise, ChemE
Bob Yuan, ChemE
Gabriel Zharov, ChemE

ADVISERS
Professor Russell Dunn, P.E., ChBE
Professor Bryan Beyer, ChBE
Professor Scott Guelcher, ChBE
Alan Crawford, consultant
David Steckler, consultant

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Innovative sulfuric acid plant design in Nashville, Tennessee

Each year, 270 million tons of sulfuric acid are produced globally, making it the most produced industrial chemical in the world. Sulfuric acid is a critical component in the fertilizer, wastewater processing, oil refining, and mineral processing industries, with a total market value over $70 billion. Our project goal is to design a chemical plant in Tennessee that is able to produce 500 tons of sulfuric acid per day using elemental sulfur as our starting reactant. This production process is highly exothermic, allowing us to harness excess heat and convert it to useful steam, which we intend to both sell to neighboring plants and use internally. The team approached this challenge in a way that maximizes the plant's profitability while maintaining high safety and environmental standards in the production, storage, and transportation of our sulfuric acid products.

A typical sulfuric acid plant

CHEMICAL AND BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEERING

TEAM
Allison Daney, ChemE
Brooke Daney, ChemE
Kara Giacose, ChemE
Claire Vossler, ChemE

ADVISERS
Professor Russell Dunn, P.E. ChBE
Professor Bryan Beyer, ChBE
Professor Scott Guelcher, ChBE
Brian Babcock, consultant

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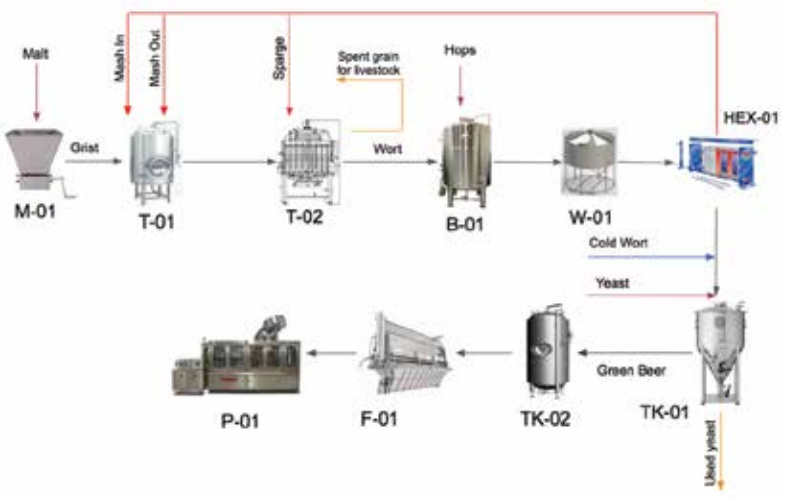
Multi-product brewing

In 2019, the overall demand for craft beers increased and more than 1000 new microbreweries opened. The maturation of beer consumers has pushed the industry toward more varieties, fuller flavors and greater efficiency. Our team designed a fully functioning grassroots microbrewery that produces 100,000 barrels per year, starting with 13 unique craft beers, for contracted investors. After researching the brewing process, the recipes were created and scaled up to 50-barrel batches. Through process modeling, equipment costing and scheduling, and external analysis, the team was able to justify their recommendation to either proceed with a startup brewery or produce the beers under contract. The craft beer grassroots brand appeals to consumers because of its novel recipes, zero emission target, and economic viability. Our grassroots facility meets the requirements requested by our investors and is the best option after two years of production.



Process flow diagram showing production of one batch.

TEAM

Cyan Baker, CE
Brett Barnett, CE
Brandi Bryson, CE
Phoebe Fowler, CE
Aayush Gupta, BME

ADVISERS

Taylan Tekeli, Nashville Civic Design Center
Scott Lockyear, P.E.

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Nashville Civic Design Center

CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

Design implications of detached accessory dwelling units (DADU)

Sample plan for a DADU that can increase housing density in Nashville.

With the human population growing and a finite amount of resources and land available, there is need to create housing for population density. In urban environments it is preferable to do this with minimal construction while maintaining safety and environmental standards of the community. One solution is the successful implementation of detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs), which are accessory apartments that serve as secondary living spaces on the grounds of single-family homes and are separate from the primary living space. Our team created a preliminary design with a method of manufacturing a DADU behind a family's home in the Germantown community in Nashville, Tennessee. LEED sustainability standards and the historic neighborhood's preservation requirements were considered.

TEAM

William Hellman, CE
Caroline Janssen, CE
Miranda Mangahas, CE
Nathan Miller, CE
Cole Siegenfeld, CE

ADVISERS

Scott Wilson, P.E., Palmer Engineering
John Hastings, P.E., American Institute of Steel Construction
Carter Bearden, PE., HDR, Inc.

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Predisan Health Ministries

Lipscomb University Design Group

CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

Honduras pedestrian bridge design

Team members Nathan and Caroline survey the riverbed in order to draw a topographic map and complete a hydrologic analysis for the proposed bridge in Bacadillas, Honduras.

For several communities near the rural village of Bacadillas, Honduras, access to the local medical clinic is restricted by a steep riverbed that becomes impassable during the rainy season. In recent years, local residents have constructed makeshift bridges annually to allow access to the clinic, only to have them washed away as the river level inevitably rises. The Vanderbilt civil engineering design team aims to eliminate this issue by producing construction-ready documents for buidling a long-term pedestrian bridge. The design includes input from the community and measurements taken of the area, gathered during a team trip to the village during fall semester 2019. The design emphasizes safety, constructability, economic feasibility, resiliency and sustainability. These documents will inform the construction of the bridge in summer 2020 as part of a mission trip with Predisan, the health ministry that sponsors the clinic. We anticipate the results of this project will allow for safe and sustained travel to the clinic and will improve the quality of life for those in the surrounding communities.

CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

TEAM
Wyatt Hall, CE
Will Harlow, CE
Matt Neuendorf, CE

ADVISERS
John Clarke, P.E., Rocky Mountain Group
Matthew Meier, Rocky Mountain Group

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Sterling Ranch Development Corporation

Foundation design on expansive soils

The geology of the Colorado Front Range causes many problems for developers. The existing soils can cause cracking of building foundations. Currently, Sterling Ranch, a massive planned community southwest of Denver, overexcavates the soil and mixes it with water to remove its expansive potential. This solution is both expensive and time consuming. The goal is to provide the best foundation solution for Sterling Ranch. To do this, the native soil was tested and a Tella Firma foundation was designed for three different sizes of Sterling Ranch homes. The Tella Firma foundation should decrease the time it takes to build a home because the native soil is left in place, avoiding overexcavation. It is anticipated that the Tella Firma foundation will be a more cost effective solution for Sterling Ranch.

The team performed a geotechnical exploration of the native soils on site at Sterling Ranch.

STERLING RANCH COLORADO

CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING

TEAM
Will Brauener, CE
Brooks Davis, CE
Jacob Ferguson, CE

ADVISERS
Eric Hoke, NCDC
Patrick Leap, P.E., Barge Design Solutions
Ann Weis, P.E., Barge Design Solutions
Peter Westerholm, GNRC
Mary Vavra, Barge Design Solutions

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Nashville Civic Design Center

Redesign of Nashville's Spaghetti Junction

Nashville's rapid growth creates widespread impacts, especially on housing and transportation. As a result, it is important to use the city's existing spaces efficiently and effectively. East Nashville's intersection of Ellington Parkway, I-24, Main Street, Spring Street and Dickerson Pike, nicknamed "Spaghetti Junction," consumes 95 acres of space with interchanges and unusable land. The goal is to redesign this area to meet current and future traffic demands while salvaging operable space and providing recommendations for future planning and land use. We worked with the Nashville Civic Design Center, Barge Design Solutions, and the Greater Nashville Regional Council to conduct a preliminary traffic analysis. Traffic and planning data informed conceptual designs of Spaghetti Junction and allowed the team to forecast new uses of the space. The results are intended to help evaluate future Nashville projects and to gain support for the redevelopment of Spaghetti Junction.

NASHVILLE CIVIC DESIGN CENTER

A preliminary design for Spaghetti Junction is superimposed on the current layout of the project area.

TEAM
Ohad Beck, CompE
Corey Castellanos, EE
Patia Fann, EE
Christina Huang, EE
Cyrus Lee, CompE
Will Wilson, EE

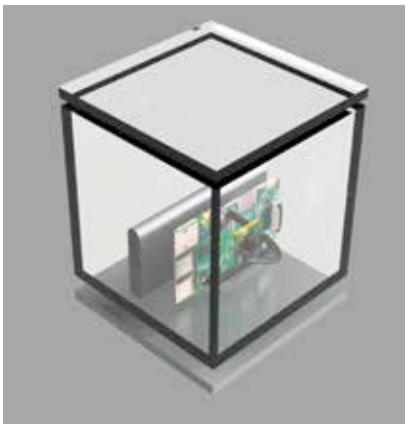
ADVISERS
Professor Ralph Bruce, EECS
Rick Hurst, Camgian

SPONSOR
Camgian Microsystems

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Designing and building an AI camera

Camgian Microsystems creates augmented intelligence systems for financial and government markets. In the national security sector, Camgian provides real-time situational awareness in austere environments. For Camgian, we are creating a low power, artificial intelligence-enabled camera that detects and captures humans and passenger vehicles in motion. The HD camera operates autonomously and classifies 2M pixel images in under 15 seconds. The camera will also be in a 5"x5"x5" enclosure, withstanding temperatures between 32 - 95°F and windblown rain. The team's design employs a Raspberry Pi night vision-enabled camera and Raspberry Pi Model 3B to serve as the computing platform. The camera system uses YOLO (You Only Look Once), a deep learning network, to classify the incoming stream of images in real time. The best frame for each classified object is selected and stored locally on the system along with the bounding box data for later retrieval. The Raspberry Pi draws power from a 12Ah lithium-ion battery and features a power management system to preserve battery life. The system is housed in a clear acrylic enclosure to protect the electronics from the elements. This camera system has potential to be employed for national security applications.



Fusion360 rendering of the team's watertight, laser-cut acrylic enclosure that contains a Raspberry Pi Model 3B, a Pi camera module v2 No-IR, and a 12Ah power supply. The bottom plate is a machined aluminum heat sink, and the enclosure is assembled around a 3D printed ABS frame. The removeable top cover is sealed to the body with a custom Viton gasket.

TEAM
Noah Baijo, EE
Meg Bobo, EE
Keegan Campanelli, EE
Alexander Dougherty, CompE

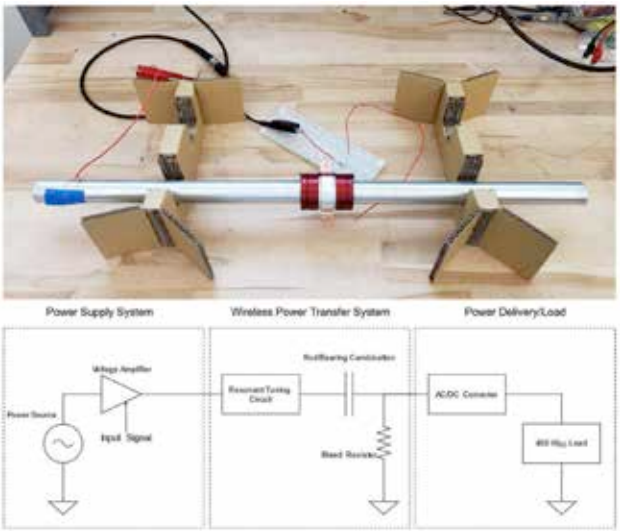
ADVISERS
Professor Ralph Bruce, EECS
Jared Chesnut, DENSO

SPONSOR
DENSO Manufacturing Tennessee

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

400W wireless power transfer system

DENSO utilizes six-axis robotic arms operating along the length of a workbench via a linear track to automate their automotive components production. This operation rapidly deteriorates the robots' power supply cabling, requiring frequent replacement of the cables. We built a wireless power transfer solution suitable for microelectronics production in clean room environments. The solution can power a robotic arm with a continuous 400W (50V, 8A) DC supply. We designed a prototype circuit for capacitive power transfer using a PTFE-lined linear motion sleeve bearing on an aluminum shaft powered with an AC voltage acting as a capacitor. This solution can transfer AC current from rod to bearing for eventual rectification and DC conversion to power DENSO's robotic arms. It can be incorporated easily into the existing linear tracks and will require less maintenance as the power transfer system will not support any mechanical load.



Above, shaft and bearing capacitive power transfer prototype. Below, the full system circuit diagram from power supply to 400 W load.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

TEAM
Jason Brito, EE
Lawrence Kwok, EE
Tony Lin, CompE
Nick Michuda, EE

ADVISERS
Professor Ralph Bruce, EECS
Charles Gerrity, EECS

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Inventiv, LLC

Project Eval: automated code review report generator

This project addresses Inventiv's need to reduce the amount of work time spent on manual code reviews and explanation of the technical errors for non-technical individuals. Eval is expected to automate this process to reduce the workload burden on Inventiv software engineers and provide an editable Google document that will list and organize errors found while providing some general explanations of the issues and bugs found in their code. The automated program will include an error parser utilizing open source software to analyze Ruby, PHP, and Java, categorization and classification of the program errors, and writing documents to the Google drive via Google API. The anticipated results will be to reduce by two hours the time spent on code review and to provide a rudimentary generalized code report and analysis that is easily readable to non-technical audiences and Inventiv clients.

The general evaluation process starts by reading in project code, analyzing it through the Eval program, and publishing Google sheets and doc review reports for the end user to edit and use.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

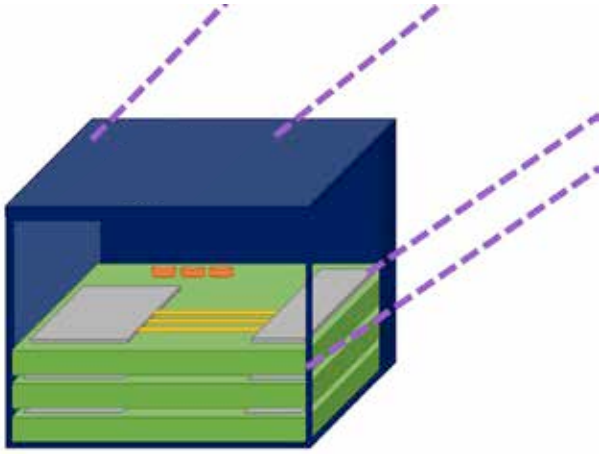
TEAM
Alexandra Douvas, CompE
Paolo Dumancas, EE
Gaby Gallego, EE
Elijah Zawatsky, CompE

ADVISERS
Professor Brian Sierawski, EECS
Professor Ralph Bruce, EECS
Charles Gerrity, EECS

SPONSOR
Institute for Space and Defense Electronics

Lunar science payload to test radiation effects on NAND flash memory

The radiation environment of the moon is generally unknown. In upcoming years, NASA plans to begin collecting data and mapping that environment using its Lunar Gateway, an in-development space station. ISDE currently studies the effects of radiation on electronics and some of these effects can be used track radiation events. By employing ISDE's research on cube satellites, this project will be able to aid in the tracking of radiation through a combination of radiative hardware effects on NAND flash memory and algorithms that generate possible radiation paths. The data collected and paths generated will provide valuable information about the moon's radiation environment and how it may affect space travel, research and further exploration.



The printed circuit board within the cube satellite tests the effects of the incoming lunar radiation by interfacing between the microcontroller and NAND flash memory chip.

TEAM
Matthew Conn, EE/Math
Bao Nguyen, CompE

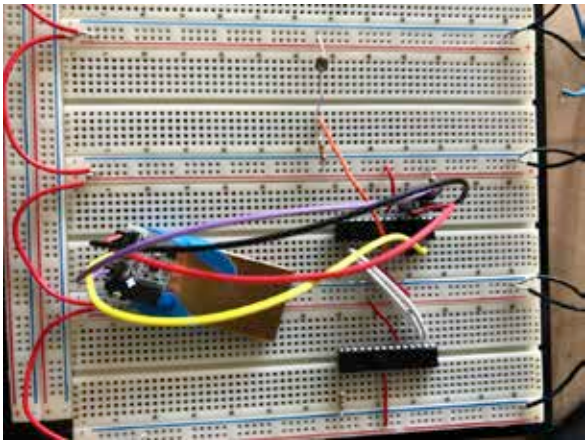
ADVISER
Professor Brian Sierawski, EECS

SPONSOR
Institute for Space and Defense Electronics

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Science payload for the Lunar Gateway

Satellites orbiting the moon may be impacted by ionizing radiation that can affect the function of electronic components. This project continues ISDE's series of CubeSat experiments in which electronic testing systems are economically deployed using the small modular satellites. Our design targets the launch of NASA's Lunar Gateway, an in-development space station destined for lunar orbit. This year's team developed a novel experiment to test the functionality of microcontrollers that may be exposed to ionizing radiation and gather data on particle strikes and radiation levels using onboard sensors. The experimental setup was implemented on a printed circuit board (PCB) that forms one "layer" within a CubeSat. The results of these experiments will be reported to a control unit, which can pass the data along to scientists on Earth.



The breadboard prototype features a power supply breakout, two microcontrollers, a photo resistor, an IR sensor, and a Geiger counter.

TEAM
Samantha Axline, CompE
Sebastian Lim, CompE
Daniel Ryan, CompE

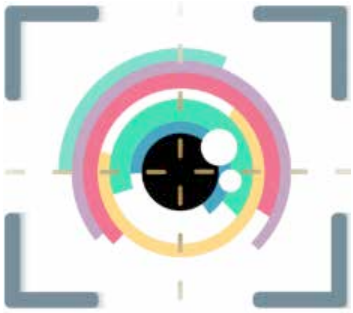
ADVISERS
Professor Ralph Bruce, EECS
Professor Daniel Levin, Psychology and Human Development
Charles Gerrity, EECS

SPONSOR
Department of Psychology and Human Development, Peabody College

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Low-cost eye tracking system for user assessment in an instructional video environment

The internet brings access to education across the globe and revolutionizes the way students and teachers interact. However, online education falls behind the classroom in terms of student engagement. In search for a better learning experience, the team researched and built software that enables eye-tracking technology to engage students in a new way, and offer insights into to how students learn. The overall team goal is to create an application that allows multiple users to record their gaze on a video and analyzes their gaze to create artistic displays of the eye-tracking information. This project uses the Tobii 4c eye-tracking board and software developed by the team. This solution creates a new way for students to interact with their learning material and new ways for instructors to analyze learning styles. We plan to create an application that allows users to record their gaze while watching a video and play back the video with gaze data overlaid in an interesting and customizable way.



Creating eye-tracking software for an instructional environment

VANDERBILT
Peabody College

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

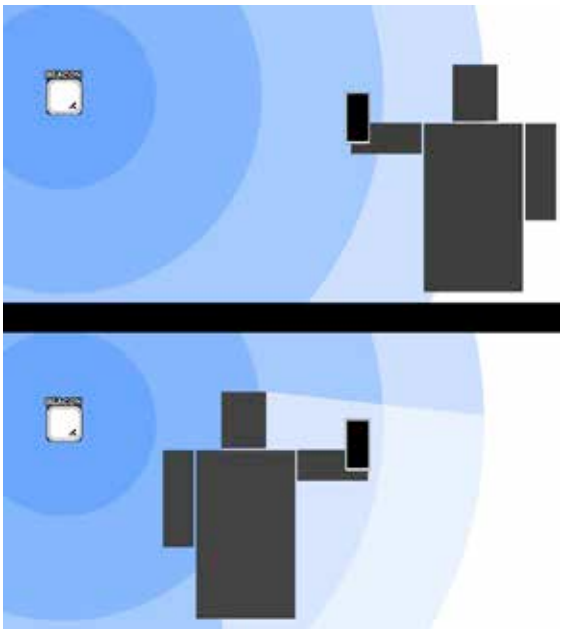
TEAM
Jovito Chase, CompE
Alvin Gao, CompE
Ahsanul Kabir, EE
Jonathan Wang, CompE

ADVISERS
Professor Ralph Bruce, EECS
Charles Gerrity, EECS
Joseph Polt, Universal Lighting Technologies

SPONSOR
Universal Lighting Technologies

ULT—IPS beacon tracking

Our project aims to develop an Indoor Positioning System (IPS) mobile application compatible with conventional market Bluetooth beacons for Universal Lighting Technologies. The IPS mobile tracking application has several potential commercial applications. If implemented, it can provide tracking for users or equipment, which could help determine heat maps of human traffic or equipment movement inside a retail store or an industrial warehouse. Also, it could guide a user to a specific indoor location using turn-by-turn instructions. In collaboration with another design team that is implementing the algorithm, we are developing the beacon configuration and the data retrieval process in order for the other team to perform position calculations, which will lead to an Android app.



The beacon signals are affected by physical objects that intercept them and the connecting device. The relative signal strength decreases even when a human is holding the device in different orientations. While the data loss is minimal, this will be taken into account in the positioning algorithms.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

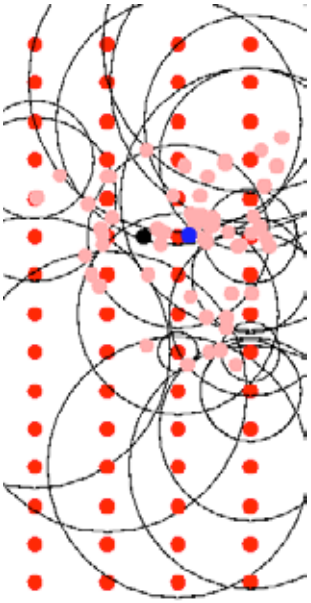
TEAM
Rosa Brooks, CompE
Eleanor Burch, CompE
Madeline Sgro, CompE

ADVISERS
Professor Ralph Bruce, EECS
Joseph Polt, Universal Lighting Technologies

SPONSOR
Universal Lighting Technologies

Internal positioning system using Bluetooth beacons

Big box warehouses and retailers are seeking ways to track people and products indoors. Camera tracking systems are expensive and can feel intrusive. Our project is an Android application that uses Bluetooth signals to determine a user's location. In a large indoor space, bluetooth beacons can be integrated subtly into ceiling light fixtures. Our app records the received signal strength indicators from surrounding beacons and uses the corresponding signal strengths to triangulate a user's location. The app also implements a pedestrian dead reckoning algorithm, which estimates a moving user's position based on their previous position and current acceleration. Our goal is to track and display a user's position overlaid on a floor plan map within two meters 95% of the time. The app could be used to give consumers step-by-step directions to products in a store.



User location estimation from a developer mode simulation. The screenshot represents an indoor space. The black dot is the user's true position. The blue dot is the app's location estimation. Red dots are Bluetooth beacons. Pink dots are triangulation results.

TEAM
Alex Barnett, ME
Jacob Gloudemans, CompE
Benjamin Hsu, EE/BME
Emre Kanli, EE

ADVISERS
Professor Amrutur V. Anilkumar, ME
Professor Ralph Bruce, EECS

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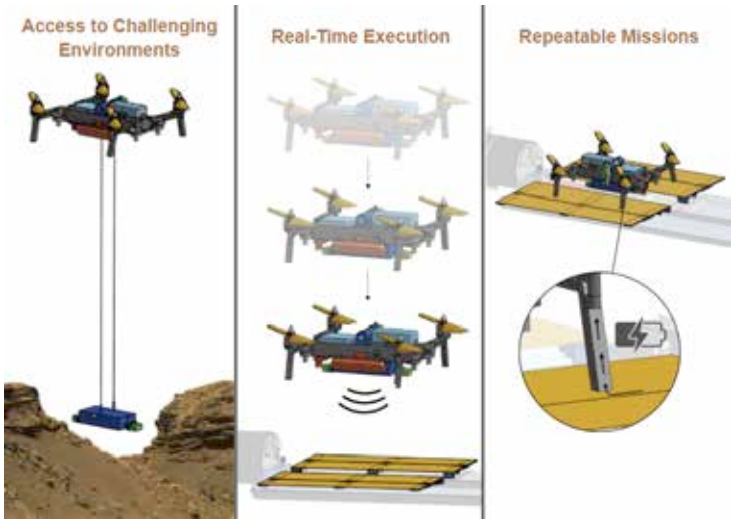
National Aeronautics and Space Administration

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Autonomous UAV for in-flight lunar ice sampling

The Vanderbilt Aerospace Design Laboratory is designing an unmanned aerial vehicle payload that will be capable of collecting a 10mL lunar ice sample during flight for the 2019-2020 NASA Student Launch competition. With the future of planetary exploration in mind, the team has added the three additional challenges of achieving repeatable, autonomous, and air-based sample collection missions. The UAV will collect samples from extreme terrain in other planetary environments, such as mountains or uneven slopes, and deposit the sample in a station integrated into the rocket. The UAV will autonomously search for, find, and navigate to the sampling zone, collect the sample, and return it to the depositing station. The UAV will then dock with a charging station to prove reliability for multiple mission cycles. This payload will provide the foundation for robust, real-time planetary sample collection missions.



The UAV will perform repeatable, autonomous sample collection in challenging planetary environments.

TEAM
Belinda Chiu, CS
Areen Kim, CS/Music
Cole Mehring, CS

ADVISER
Professor Jules White, EECS

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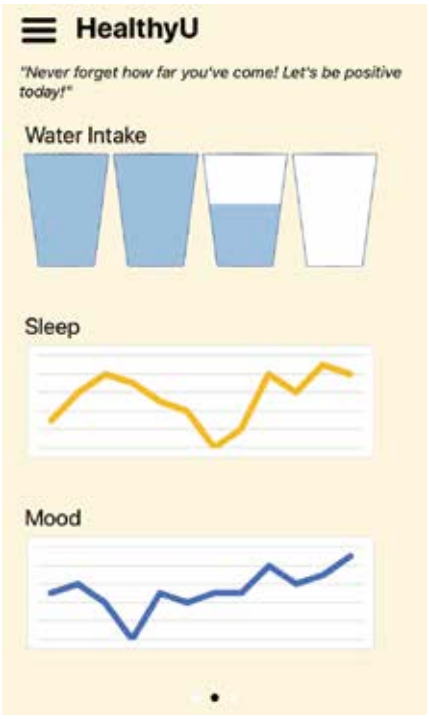
HealthyU

HealthyU is a mobile app to help users live and maintain healthy lifestyles by tracking physical and mental health habits. Features include tracking water and food intake, medicine and mood, breathing exercises, guided meditation and emergency call options for quick call and response with user-defined contacts. HealthyU's interface is customizable and simple, allowing users to comfortably navigate through the app quickly and intuitively, encouraging frequent usage and allowing easy access to vital resources during times of urgency. The app also provides a more holistic overview of the user's mental and physical health. The goal of this project is the app's ease of use, allowing the app to become an integrated part of a user's daily routine with minimal effort.



The application homepage displays trackers for the user's basic health and wellness information along with the option to navigate to more detailed reports and other features.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

TEAM
Neil Dan, CS
Gabriela Gresenz, CS
Zack Noble, CS
Olivia Tanzman, CS
Allison Trager, CS

ADVISER
Professor Jules White, EECS

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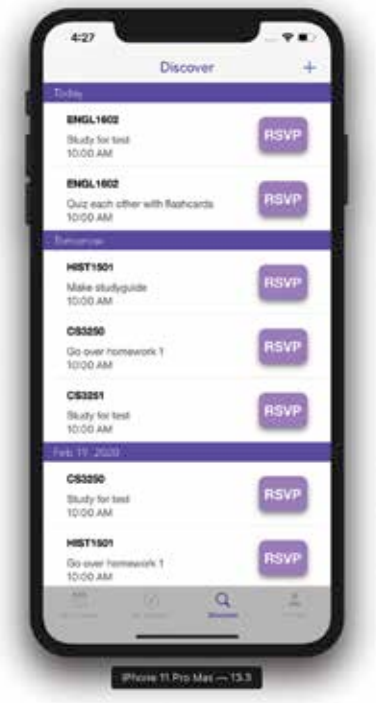
Synapse

Synapse is a study group event-planner iOS application for college students. Users can view a list of study groups on campus organized by class, purpose, date, and time. In our application, users will sign up with their university and then have the opportunity to add themselves to courses, browse and join available study groups, create their own study groups, and track all of their events in our built-in, calendar-type view. Our development team created an iOS application using XCode as the development environment, Swift for front-end development, and Firebase for the database. While there are a few study group applications available in app stores, no application is widespread across most college campuses. Some college campuses have their own applications, but students from other universities do not have access to those. The goal of this application is to provide a generalized platform to help connect students within classes to promote an inclusive team-oriented environment among college campuses.



On Synapse's Discover Page, users can browse all events for classes in which they are enrolled. Events are sorted by date, which makes finding them easy. Users can click on the RSVP button to attend an event and it will appear on their My Events page.

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ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

TEAM
Boen Du, CS/Econ
Mingqian Wu, CS/Psy

ADVISER
Professor Jules White, EECS

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GPA Confidential

Vanderbilt students, especially first-year students, have limited knowledge about whether or not to take a class. The course evaluations conducted at the end of each semester are not available to students, and websites like ratemyprofessor.com may not accurately reflect the difficulty level of a specific class. For instance, a harsh-grading professor may teach a beginner-friendly intro class. For most students, an effective indicator of class difficulty is its average grade. Our management system app, supported by Firebase, uses a Chrome extension that reprograms the webpage of YES (Your Enrollment Service), the academic records and registration portal for Vanderbilt University students. The software collects and displays class grades; students can preview the average GPA in a professor's course. It will display the GPA information similar to BerkeleyTime, but the seamless UI is akin to Rate My Vandy Professor, as it displays the students' average GPA next to a course on YES.

The designed Chrome extension reprograms the webpage of YES and allows users to review average grades of most classes.

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TEAM
Jacob Park, CS
Kathy Zhang, CS/Bass Performance

ADVISER
Professor Jules White, EECS

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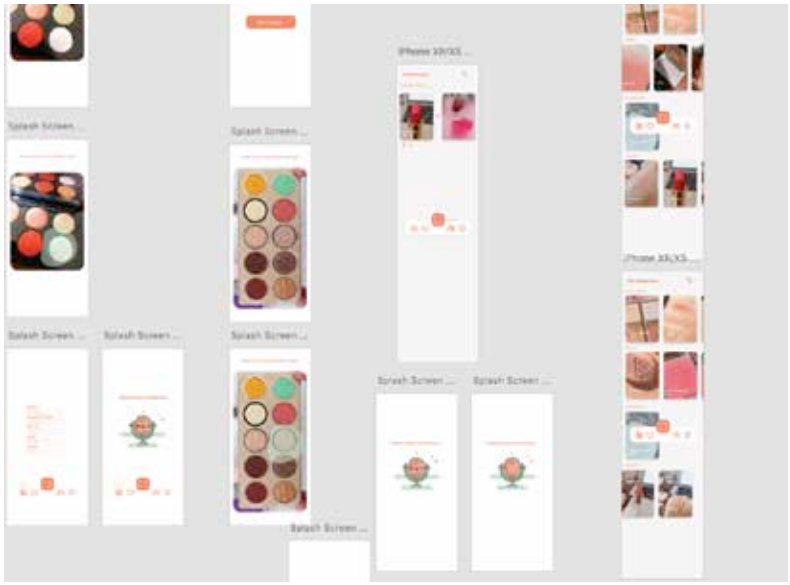
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

DupeIt

The cosmetics industry is saturated with products. Our app creates a useful way for users to compare new products to existing products they already own. A "dupe" of an item is an alternative item (usually cheaper) that looks and performs very similarly. Currently, the programs that exist to find dupes put the burden of comparison on the users. Our app automates the process of finding the best matching dupe in a user's current collection. There are three main features of our app: an image-selector to pick something to be duped, a library of a user's current cosmetic collection, and a community for users to share dupes they enjoy. We anticipate that our app will help users find dupes in their collection and decrease their spending on cosmetics.



Our app schematic illustrates some of the capabilities of our program, like the image-taking dupe functionality and the collection layout for the user

VANDERBILT. SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

TEAM
Jill Calderone, CS/Econ
Shan Chidambaram, CS/Cognitive Studies
Caroline Henning, CS/Math
Jaya Kumari, CS
Julia Schmitt, CS/Math

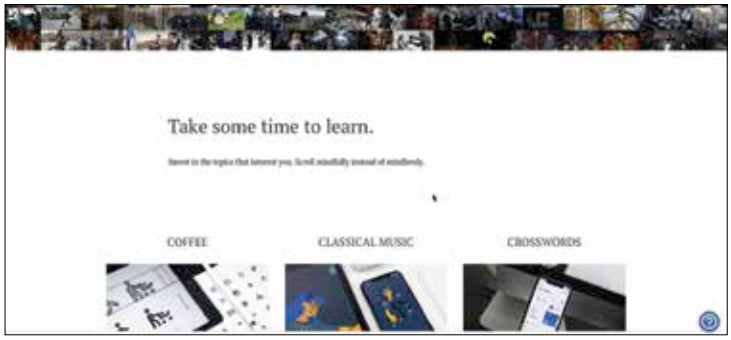
ADVISER
Professor Jules White, EECS

SPONSOR
Vanderbilt School of Engineering

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Content Curation

The goal of Content Curation is to encourage mindful scrolling—changing an existing time-consuming habit to be productive and, hopefully, educational. Content Curation is designed as a web app with Google's Firebase supplying most backend capabilities. Firebase supplies data storage, traffic information, website hosting and user authentication. User authentication originally was developed using PHP and MySQL but was eventually replaced with Firebase authentication for improved security and ease of implementation. The front end of the site is designed using Javascript, HTML and CSS. The user experience should emulate that of a social media platform. The user is able to follow friends and view content friends have added to the site as well as populate their feed with content from the topics they choose to follow.



Users can choose from a range of topics to populate their feed with specially curated content.

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ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

TEAM
Thomas Liu, CS/Cognative Studies
Cole Sawyer, CS/Math
Andrew Settleman, CS

ADVISER
Professor Jules White, EECS

SPONSOR
Vanderbilt School of Engineering

Authenticoin

Counterfeits plague in-demand luxury goods such as high-end electronics and designer and luxury apparel, which account for up to 70% of the total counterfeit product trade. Our project goal is to build a non-fungible token (NFT) on the Ethereum blockchain that can be used to verify the authenticity of purchased products. A blockchain is a decentralized, immutable record of data. Each block represents a transaction and is verified by a network of computers. When a block is added to the chain, it documents all transactions placed on the blockchain to a public ledger and record that is mathematically verified. In large systems like the Ethereum blockchain, forgeries are prohibitively difficult and expensive for any person or group to achieve. NFTs are unique tokens on the Ethereum blockchain that can digitally represent products, such as clothing, house deeds or other assets. Our NFT implements the ERC-721 standard for Ethereum-based NFTs. Our team aims to create a unique token associated and sold with individual products that can be used to verify the authenticity of the product by way of its transaction record on the blockchain.

The mobile application allows users to view their assets.

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

TEAM
Ben Cooper, CS
Tim Liang, CS
Gabriel Ting, CS/Asian Studies/Math

ADVISER
Professor Graham Hemingway, CS

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VandyHacks

Vaken

Vaken is a free open-source application to help organizers of hackathons and events of all size manage their events with a fully featured registration system. The team added innovations to a VandyHacks product, implementing a plugin architecture, which means features outside the core application can be installed and uninstalled with ease. Thus, event organizers can customize Vaken to their specifications. The team developed OAuth with GitHub, Google and Microsoft plugins, and extracted NFC into another plugin, making the process easier for new developers in the VandyHacks organization. To support this, the team also is developing complete documentation to ensure longevity of Vaken and VandyHacks' development processes.

Full management of all applicants with integration using NFC tracking, resume tracking and more.

TEAM
Jeremy Devin, CS
Shelby Kuchta, CS
Fernando Mendez Campos, ES

ADVISER
Professor Graham Hemingway, CS

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Vanderbilt School of Engineering

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

VanderBuilt

Many Vanderbilt students use the Recreation and Wellness Center on a daily basis. However, no up-to-date mobile application designed to enhance the rec center experience exists. The goals of the VanderBuilt app are to connect rec center patrons, provide useful information, and encourage increased use of the center. The app has four main components. The workout component allows users to log workouts. The social media component allows users to post their workouts and view friends' workouts. The group component allows users to belong to groups for the purpose of scheduling pick-up games, and the information component gives up-to-date information on rec center hours and classes. VanderBuilt uses React Native on the frontend to provide functionality on both iOS and Android. The backend uses Node.js and Express for the server, GraphQL for the API, and MongoDB for the database.

User interface for the My Workouts screen.

VANDERBILT. SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

TEAM
James Sam Chandler, CS
Davis Lee, CS
Shuyi Liu, CS
Nnamdi Okabuonye, CS
Thomas Westerhold, CS/Math
Nash Zhou, CS

ADVISER
Professor Jules White, EECS

SPONSOR
Vanderbilt School of Engineering

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING AND COMPUTER SCIENCE

Transcrybit

Currently, there is no method to search an audio or video file for keywords like one can for text documents. With an increase in online media content it is becoming increasingly important to be able to quickly find specific information. Our team developed a web-based application, Transcrybit, using Python and Mozilla's DeepSpeech API, as well as the React Library, JavaScript, CSS, and Amazon Web Services. Using these tools our team has been able to transcribe audio from uploaded audio/video files into text with timestamps, so that the content from these files can be searched as a text file. The associated timestamps from the results of these searches can then be used to direct the user to the keywords in the audio or video file they are searching. The goal for this software to be applied to applications such as Netflix, YouTube, and Spotify as it allows users to more efficiently parse through movies, shows, music, and podcasts.

TRANSCRYBIT

The Transcrybit logo in Weibei SC font, where the i is represented as a magnifying glass looking at audio waves.

VANDERBILT. SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

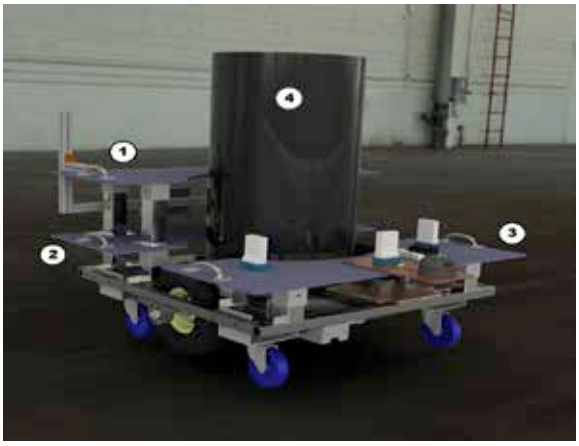
TEAM
Braden Barnett, ME
John Mark Goeke, CompE
Sam Gottlieb, CompE
Emmet Haden, ME
Swapnil Pande, ME
Charles Tusa, ME

ADVISER
Nick Hegeman, Foreman Technologies and CertaPro Painters North Nashville

SPONSORS
Foreman Technologies
CertaPro Painters North Nashville

Autonomous painting robot

The rising cost of labor and a shortage of workers in the construction/painting industry has prompted automated solutions to reduce time and labor costs. Our team is automating the process of applying finishes to large, horizontal areas such as warehouse floors and roofing systems. We designed an autonomous robotic control workflow conducive to real painting projects, including place localization anchors in the environment, a 3D map of the room, and a starting location for the robot. We selected a sensor suite and developed robot-agnostic autonomy algorithms so that they could be reused on future painting projects. We designed a custom robotic platform. The team focused on modularity by dividing the system into easily removable, serviceable, and upgradeable components. Currently, there are modules for autonomous control computation, power distribution, and coating application. The base robot and frame is able to carry up to 480 pounds and has an open central section to transport a 16-gallon (200 pound) drum of paint, allowing the robot to cover up to 3,200 to 5,600 square feet of floor space without a refill.



A model of the autonomous painting robot in a warehouse environment: (1) Paint Application Module, (2) Power Distribution Module, (3) Computation Module, and (4) 16-gallon (200 pound) central paint vessel.

CertaPro Painters

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

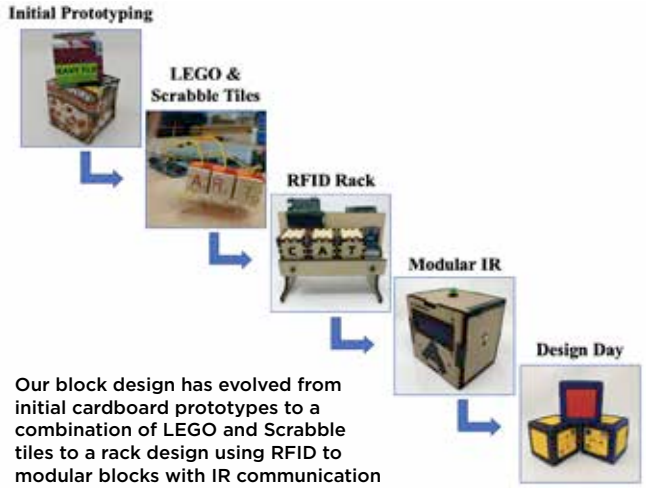
TEAM
Abbey Carlson, ME
Olivia Cook, ME
Emily Larson, ME
James Zhu, ME/Math

ADVISER
Neena Saha, PhD, Peabody College

SPONSORS
Vanderbilt University Peabody College
Vanderbilt School of Engineering

Smart alphabet blocks

Alphabet blocks are a classic children's toy, however, without the guidance of an adult, they do not teach children how to spell. We designed and built a set of smart alphabet blocks that communicate whether or not a word spelled with the blocks is a real word. The blocks snap together with magnets, which triggers the sending and receiving of infrared (IR) signals between blocks. The IR signal sent from one block is received by the neighboring block and decoded as a numeric value corresponding to a letter (or letter combination) using the ASCII standard. Once the blocks know what order they are in, the sequence of letters is checked against an onboard dictionary. The blocks then create sensory feedback to communicate to the user if the word they spelled is real or not. These blocks improve over our previous designs because they are modular, wireless, battery-powered, and durable. As a final product, smart alphabet blocks must be safe, durable, affordable, intuitive, and fun.



Our block design has evolved from initial cardboard prototypes to a combination of LEGO and Scrabble tiles to a rack design using RFID to modular blocks with IR communication and to our final design: 3D-printed blocks with silicone edges that communicate using IR signals.

VANDERBILT. PEABODY COLLEGE

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TEAM
Francis Basile, ME
Andrew Harkaway, ME
John Liptack, ME
Tanner Thompson, ME

ADVISER
Brian Lesniak, TexTenn

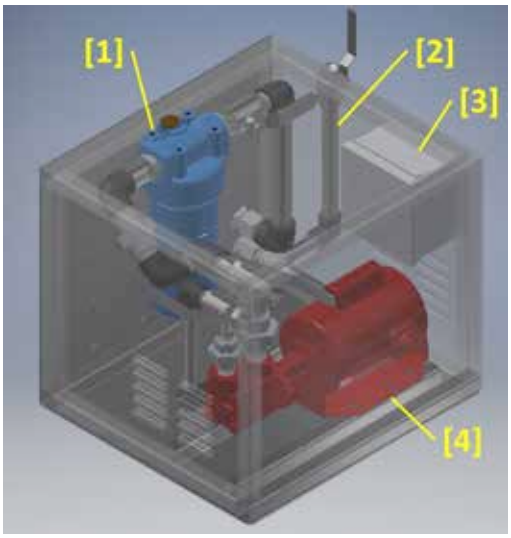
SPONSOR
TexTenn Design and Consulting

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Comprehensive oil management system for cooling tower gearboxes

Cooling towers use fans to eject heat to the surrounding environment. The fan gearbox is a common point of failure due to the degradation of its lubricating oil. The degradation normally results from particle contamination and overheating. Failures of these gearboxes represent significant financial losses for tower operators. Our project addresses this problem by managing the lubricating oil within the gearbox. The system incorporates two main elements: a base filtration kit and a cooling kit. The base filtration system contains a fine particulate and water filter, a pump, and a level monitoring element. The cooling kit contains a stainless-steel coiled heat exchanger, which addresses the runaway thermal issues common to many gearboxes. Our oil management system allows cooling tower operators to have a stationary solution to the core oil degradation issues, as opposed to the temporary solutions commonly on the market. The system can filter out fine particulates, absorb water, and reduce oil temperature to extend the usage life of the gear oil and ultimately the gearboxes themselves.

TexTenn Design & Consulting



This is the base filtration system with [1] filter assembly, [2] level monitoring attachment, [3] electronics box, and [4] pump with included sensor array, which in combination with the cooling kit [not shown] provide for oil management of a cooling tower gearbox.

TEAM
Anastasia Bouchelion, ME
Austi Critchfield, ME
Ethan James, ME
Matthew Regala, ME
Natalie Zhang, ME

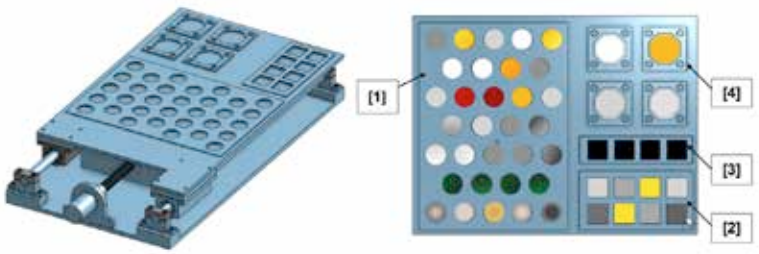
ADVISERS
Tracie J. Prater, NASA Marshall Space Flight Center
Dan Hendrickson, Astrobotic Technology, Inc.

SPONSOR
NASA Marshall Space Flight Center

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Lunar specimen holder and materials trade study

NASA's goals for the Artemis and Gateway programs and the long-term goal of lunar ization require better understanding of the adverse effects of lunar dust, micrometeoroid impacts, radiation, and rapid temperature changes. The first undertaking required the team to construct a specimen holder for materials testing on the lunar surface, as well as design a stable deployment method for the experiment's one-year duration. In order to populate the sample tray, the team conducted a materials trade study of promising materials for lunar longevity. The variety of the selected materials from the trade study and their exposure in the designed sample tray will not only allow for a holistic investigation of lunar environmental effects, but also provide valuable insight into future materials for lunar missions.



Left: The Vulcan specimen holder uses linear actuation to deploy and retract the tray populated with the selected promising materials from seven classes. Right: Schematic of the populated sample holder with a total of 48 samples from seven material classes. Holder [1] houses absorbers, radiators, structural materials, environmental sensors, and control samples, [2] houses mirror samples, [3] houses solar cells, and [4] contains multi-layer insulation materials.

NASA

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

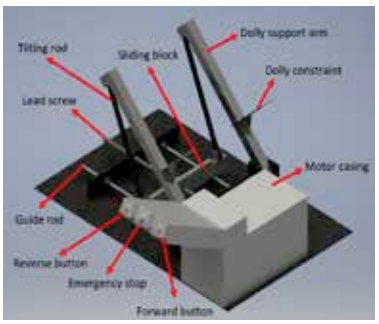
TEAM
Anthony John, ME
Cristina Campos, ME
Jack Noyes, ME
Zach Shue, ME
Xinlin Zhong, ME

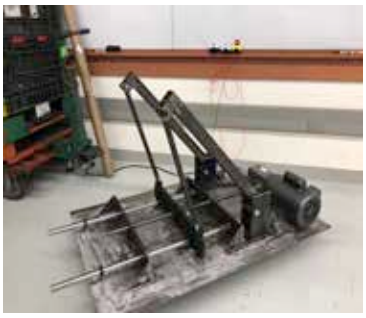
ADVISERS
David Blaylock, Nissan North America
Mark Larson, Nissan North America

SPONSOR
Nissan North America

Dolly tilt project

The Nissan plant in Smyrna, Tennessee, uses large dollies to store parts in their work areas. Workers have been climbing on them or using custom platforms to reach parts inside the containers. The goal of this project was to design a safe, repeatable method to tilt these dollies to provide easy access to the parts. Design constraints included that the device must be pneumatic or electric powered, tilt to 50 degrees, fit under the dolly, and have simple operator controls. The team designed and prototyped a device that uses an electric motor to power a leadscrew that drives the tilting mechanism. This design allows for a lower cost device in comparison to many existing hydraulic solutions. The design uses a sliding block that lifts a pair of supporting arms. The finished system will tilt the Nissan part dollies safely into a more ergonomic position for workers.





The dolly tilting system consists of an electrically powered lead screw that moves a sliding block to tilt a dolly to a more ergonomic and safe position for workers. Left, current system; a worker stands on the dolly to reach parts inside. Center, the detailed CAD of the system. Right, the foundation of the newly fabricated device undergoing initial testing.

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

TEAM
Dana Bandi, ME
Jared Bovine, ME
Jessica Latham, CE
Alex Rehr, ME/Econ
Sam Super, ME
Katherine Turner, CE

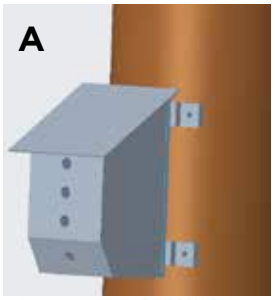
ADVISERS
Micah DeYoung, Booz Allen Hamilton
Adrian Perez, Booz Allen Hamilton

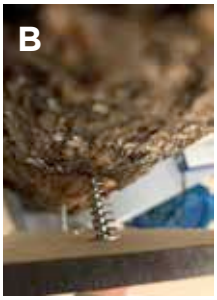
SPONSOR
Booz Allen Hamilton

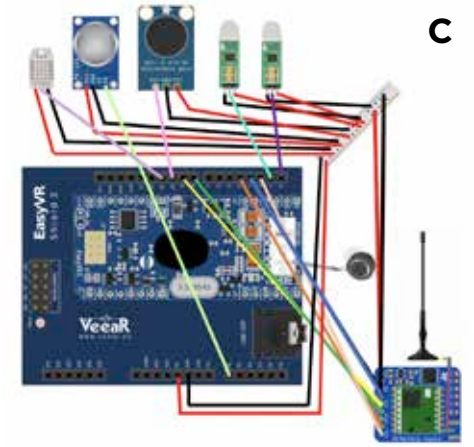
Forest fire prevention and detection system

The goal of this project was to develop a low power, sustainable and affordable forest fire prevention and detection system, with an emphasis on prevention. The final objective was a sensor node that determines the fire risk level based on the following key inputs: passive infrared motion detection, speech recognition, sound level monitoring, temperature, relative humidity, and smoke (air quality) monitoring. The measurements from sensors are analyzed by a microcontroller within the node that wirelessly transmits the calculated risk level via LoRa wireless frequency radio technology. The sensors focus on the detection of human-caused fires, which account for 90% of forest fire events. The project focused specifically on monitoring environmental conditions and human presence for deployment in the San Bernardino National Forest in Southern California. A cost assessment was performed for a mesh network implementation of the nodes that would target key areas of activity in the forest. The sensor node, cost analysis, and risk model create a comprehensive prevention and detection system.

The housing for the sensor system [A] has weather-resistant features, strategically placed holes for optimal detection of humans, and an enclosure designed for easy maintenance. [B] A spring and washer system for the attachment screws allows for tree growth without damaging the tree or the sensor housing. [C] The sensor package and wiring diagram for the forest fire prevention and detection system.







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TEAM
Osama Assal, ME
Mark McKee, ME
Tristan Miranda, ME
Zach Taylor, ME
Connor Woodall, ME

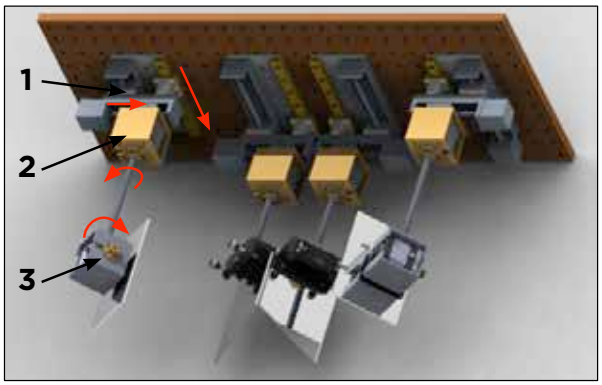
ADVISERS
Professor Alexander Maier, Department of Psychology
Brock Carlson, Department of Psychology

SPONSOR
MaierLab Neurophysiology Laboratory, College of Arts and Science

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Multi-axis motorized system for visual neurophysiology study

MaierLab is a neurophysiology research laboratory intent on understanding the condition of amblyopia, a form of cognitive blindness, by studying visual pathways and neuronal circuitry in the brain. Testing is performed using a stereoscope system, a mirror assembly used to fuse the test subject's field of view on two identical images in the visual cortex. MaierLab's previous stereoscope was manually calibrated, meaning the operator had to make small adjustments to each mirror by hand while traveling between the control room and the testing room, which took up to 8 hours. We have designed an automated stereoscope system that can be calibrated and controlled from the control room. This automated system has 14 degrees of freedom (DoF): 8 translational and 6 rotational. Each DoF is actuated by a high-precision stepper motor and controlled with modular motor driver board. Precise calibration can be achieved with these actuator units— rotations of less than 0.5° for the rotational components and minimum steps of less than 0.1 mm for the translational components. This automated stereoscope will be controlled through a custom Simulink interface, allowing accurate positioning for calibration and testing of the visual pathways.



Fully automated stereoscope system allows the testing of a subject viewing two identical images to combine the two images together as one in the subject's brain. Translation [1] via linear actuators and a frictionless slider carriage, rotation [2] via stepper motor with attached shaft, and tilt [3] via a dual shaft stepper motor. Red arrows indicate different achievable movements.

maierLab
Department of Psychology, Vanderbilt University

TEAM
Caroline Calabrese, ME
Erica Copenhaver, ME
Emory Eastin, ME
Sophia Sauma, ME

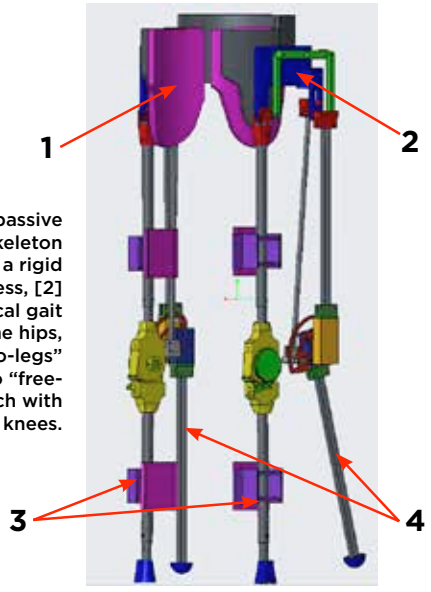
ADVISERS
Professor David Braun, ME
Tiange Zhang, ME

SPONSOR
Advanced Robotics & Control Lab

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Passive, weight-bearing exoskeleton to assist first responders

Rescuers and first responders must carry heavy loads over long distances. Most lower-limb exoskeletons on the market that aid first responders are powered, making them heavy and expensive. Many are so heavy that the user can walk only at low speeds over short distances, causing delays in response time. We developed an unpowered, weight-bearing, lower-limb exoskeleton that features a rigid harness spanning around the back of the wearer. A backpack straps around the harness to transfer over 80% of the load through the waist and down the legs. Two legs (termed the exo-legs) are securely strapped to the wearer. Two additional legs (termed the free-legs) are offset next to the wearer. The hip joint uses a reciprocal gait orthosis to control the motion of the free-legs. At any point in the gait cycle, two legs are on the ground supporting the weight of the load. This design is self-standing, allowing the user to step out of the exoskeleton to load the backpack or attend to the task at hand. Ultimately, this design will allow first responders to avoid fatigue and injury while carrying heavy equipment.



The passive exoskeleton features [1] a rigid waist harness, [2] reciprocal gait orthoses at the hips, [3] two "exo-legs" and [4] two "free-legs," each with lockable knees.

CREATE CENTER FOR REHABILITATION ENGINEERING + ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

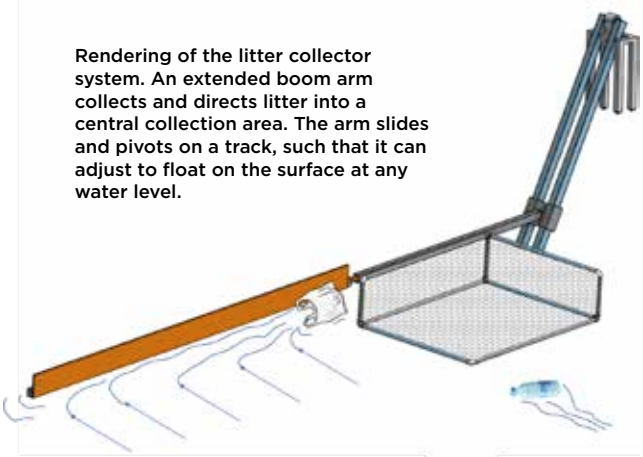
TEAM
Andrew Albert, ME
Serena Hostetter, ME
James Kirk, ME
Matthew MacDonald, ME
Samantha Rowland, CE
Eric Shanahan, ME
Nicholas Spurlock, BME

ADVISERS
Ross Miller, Cumberland River Compact
Gary Mryncza, KCI Technologies
Brett Wesnofske, Sunrise Contracting
Connie Wesnofske, Sunrise Contracting

SPONSOR
Cumberland River Compact

Repeatable river litter collector

The Cumberland River experiences a high concentration of litter after rainfall events, mostly flowing into the river from tributaries. The litter eventually degrades into micro particles that negatively impact wildlife and human health. The Cumberland River Compact enlisted our team to design a litter collection system that can be placed in streams in Nashville to capture surface litter before it reaches the Cumberland. Our passive system uses the flow of the water to direct trash along an angled arm into a floating collection bin. The collection bin will slide on an anchored rail, allowing it to account for water level changes of over 20 feet while staying firmly planted in any river bank. Our goal is to provide a long-term and cost-effective alternative to the CRC's events during which volunteers collect the surface litter in these tributaries. These cleanups happen a few times a year and cost approximately $500 per cleanup day. Ideally, this device will keep the Cumberland River cleaner and protect the health of wildlife and the local population.



Rendering of the litter collector system. An extended boom arm collects and directs litter into a central collection area. The arm slides and pivots on a track, such that it can adjust to float on the surface at any water level.

CUMBERLAND RIVER COMPACT

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

TEAM
Tristan Gilbert, ME
Tamas Kis, ME
Sophia Moak, ME
Luke Neise, ME
Jonathan Powles, ME
Adam Smith, ME

ADVISER
Professor Amrutur Anilkumar, ME

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Vanderbilt Aerospace Design Laboratory
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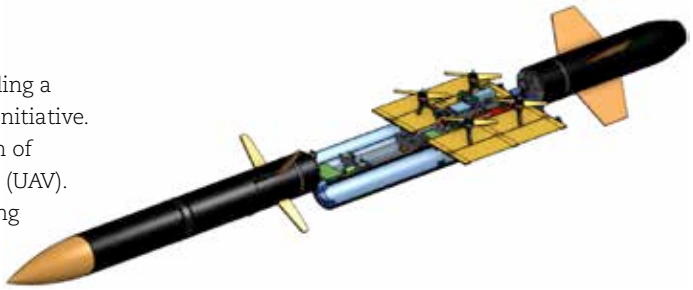
Vehicles for planetary ice sample collection

The Vanderbilt Aerospace Design Laboratory is designing and building a rocket and payload to compete in the 2020 NASA Student Launch Initiative. Our design team is primarily responsible for the mechanical design of the launch vehicle (rocket), charging station, and excursion vehicle (UAV). The rocket will fly to a target altitude of 3,750 feet before descending under two parachutes. Upon landing, the payload bay section of the rocket will orient skyward and open, releasing the UAV and charging station payload. This UAV will autonomously navigate to a sampling zone containing a planetary ice simulant. There, it will actuate a sampling tool to collect 15 mL of simulant without landing, enabling sample collection in challenging environments and without remote communication. The UAV will then navigate back to the rocket and land on the charging station to recharge for another sampling mission, enabling sample collections from multiple locations. Further, air-based sampling, recharging, and autonomous navigation/control will demonstrate robust, repeated, and communication-free planetary sampling missions.



The 10-foot long launch vehicle carries a UAV and charging station for repeatable, autonomous, air-based sampling missions.

VADL VANDERBILT AEROSPACE DESIGN LABORATORY

NASA

Design and project faculty

We take great pride in recognizing these faculty members who are the core of our design program. Their outstanding contributions and excellence as instructors, advisers and mentors in our senior design and project courses have led to the work demonstrated on Design Day 2020 and have transformed our Class of 2020 into young professionals.

BRYAN BEYER
Lecturer in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

RALPH BRUCE
Professor of the Practice of Electrical Engineering

RUSSELL DUNN
Professor of the Practice of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

SCOTT GUELCHER
Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering

GRAHAM HEMINGWAY
Associate Professor of the Practice of Computer Science and Computer Engineering

JASON MITCHELL
Research Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering

LORI TROXEL
Professor of the Practice of Civil and Environmental Engineering

MATTHEW WALKER III
Professor of the Practice of Biomedical Engineering

JULES WHITE
Associate Professor of Computer Science and Computer Engineering

THOMAS WITHROW
Assistant Dean for Design
Associate Professor of the Practice of Mechanical Engineering

Administration

Dean
Philippe Fauchet, Bruce and Bridgitt Evans Dean
philippe.fauchet@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 322-0720

Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Faculty Affairs
E. Duco Jansen
duco.jansen@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 343-3773

Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education
Cynthia Paschal
cynthia.paschal@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 343-3773

Associate Dean for Research
Peter T. Cummings, John R. Hall Professor of Chemical Engineering
peter.cummings@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 343-3773

Associate Dean for Academic Success
William Robinson
william.h.robinson@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 322-1507

Associate Dean for Development and Alumni Relations
Teresa Rogers
teresa.rogers@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 322-4934

Associate Dean for External Relations and Director of Communications
Christopher Rowe
chris.rowe@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 343-3773

Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
Burgess Mitchell
burgess.mitchell@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 343-8061

Assistant Dean for Academic Programs
Julie Vernon
julie.vernon@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 322-2441

Assistant Dean for Design
Thomas J. Withrow
thomas.j.withrow@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 322-3594

Chief Business Officer
Hector O. Silva
hector.silva@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 875-8079

Departments

Department of Biomedical Engineering
Michael King, Chair, J. Lawrence Wilson Professor of Engineering
mike.king@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 322-3521

Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering
Kane Jennings, Chair
kane.g.jennings@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 322-2441

Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Douglas Adams, Chair, Daniel F. Flowers Professor and Distinguished Professor
douglas.adams@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 322-2697

Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
Daniel Fleetwood, Chair, Olin H. Landreth Professor of Engineering
dan.fleetwood@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 322-2771

Department of Mechanical Engineering
Nilanjan Sarkar, Chair, David K. Wilson Professor of Engineering
nilanjan.sarkar@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 343-7219

Division of General Engineering
Yiorgos Kostoulas, Director
yiorgos.kostoulas@vanderbilt.edu
615-343-4965

Notes

VANDERBILT®
SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

PMB 351592
2301 Vanderbilt Place
Nashville, TN 37235-1592

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