

The road to Indianapolis

By John Smith

Combine a team of individuals dedicated to helping their fellow man with a renowned technical institute like SAIT and you have a recipe for success.

A group of mechanical engineering students in their second year at SAIT have entered a contest sponsored by the Institute for Affordable Transportation (IAT) to construct the best basic utility vehicle.

A basic utility vehicle is exactly what the name suggests. It is a multi purpose vehicle designed to make day-to-day tasks easier, in this case for the people of third world countries. The winning vehicle of this contest will be used for many tasks such as acting as an ambulance or a bus. It will also be used to transfer produce from farms and hopefully even used to help clear mine fields.

This SAIT team is actually the first-ever international team to compete in this contest that has been sponsored for three years now.

The IAT sponsored contest has developed some very strict guidelines that must be adhered to in order to win. The total production cost of the vehicle cannot exceed more than \$900 U.S. and it must function well in low traffic areas with warm climates.

The vehicle must also be able to travel on roads that have never been paved while being able to transport at least 1,000 pounds of cargo at the same time. The expected traveling distance that the vehicle will be required to cover is estimated at over 100 miles at a time.

While no actual prototype of the vehicle SAIT is entering could be viewed, we were able to

obtain some interesting specs on this innovative cruiser.

SAIT is expecting its hot-rod will have a dry vehicle weight of about 500 pounds and will have a top speed of roughly 20 miles per hour. The powerhouse for this project comes from an 8.5 horsepower core carbureted, internal combustion gasoline engine and produces amazing 12.2-pound feet of torque at 2,500 rpm.

"We will be using what is termed a live axle," said Kenneth Wilson, a member of the team who has been with this project since the beginning. "You lose a lot of your turning ability with a live axle but you gain more in traction.

The intended target market for this vehicle will be places like Mexico, Zambia and Nicaragua.

"The largest hurdle we are facing this year is raising enough money to attend the competition in Indianapolis Indiana on May 10," said Blair Oler,

another dedicated engineer on the team. "So far we have raised \$6,000 but we will need at least \$2,000 more if we are going to be able to attend. We obtained this money by sending in an application to the SAIT Legacy 88 fund."

The top students who are deemed worthy by IAT will be awarded prizes and tickets to the Indianapolis race-way for the judging of the competition but the rest of the teams are expected to pay their own way to the event.

"All of Canada will get a little jump if we win this competition," said Wilson. "Being the first international team to compete in this contest is great, but the fact we get to represent Canada will be even better."

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— Kenneth Wilson, mechanical engineering



photo by John Smith

SAIT's mechanical engineering students are designing a basic utility vehicle to enter into a contest sponsored by Institute for Affordable Transportation.



photo by John Smith

An 8.5 horsepower power engine will drive SAIT's basic utility vehicle.

Program readies students for life on railway

By Stan Siegenberg

If you've ever wanted to sport some overalls and operate a train, your first step toward fulfilling this dream could start at SAIT.

SAIT's one-year railway conductor program earns students their Railway Conductor certificate, greatly increasing their chance to find work in the field. The program prepares students for employment in Class 1 Railways in North America, as well as shortline and regional carriers.

According to the SAIT Web site, railway conductor

students have a 100 per cent employment rate upon graduation. Since the railway industry is facing a retirement turnover of approximately 70 per cent over the next 10 years, Canadian railways are forecasting the need for more than 1,000 conductors in the next five years.

The Railway Conductor program has been designed under the guidance of an industry advisory committee, which is made up of railway representatives from across Canada. Students learn to work as a conductor in yard or road service, and will be involved in switching cars,

making and splitting up train yards, moving cars between roads, and anything else the instructors deem worthy of their time.

Prospective students must have an Alberta high school diploma, and a grade of at least 50 per cent grade in a Grade 12 English and math class. The cost of the Railway Conductor program will run students around \$8,000.

If you've already got your suspenders in a bunch, there will be an information night on Feb. 12. Contact the SAIT registrar for details.

Seminars helping anxious students overcome exam jitters

By Roberta McDonald

The Learning Skills Centre was teeming with anxious students last week as they nervously geared up for impending mid terms and final projects.

The stress associated with exams has been well documented but luckily for SAIT students, there is hope in the form of Student Success Seminars.

Diane Skene and Susan MacCulloch of the Learning Skills Centre have partnered to provide a series of seminars geared towards helping students achieve their full potential and overcome exam anxiety beginning Feb. 10.

For Skene, the idea that students get

themselves into trouble by slacking isn't delving deep enough into the underlying reasons some students don't perform well in test settings.

"The problem is most of us, if not everybody in the entire world, has a lot of procrastination power in their life," she says.

"We've gone through high school and been able to do everything at the last minute and sort of, kind of, succeed. So, a lot of people have never really developed the tools to do last-minute effectively."

"In Cramming 101, we go over prioritizing what you can do with the time you have. You have to look at how much time that you have and look at the course and

what's on the exams. Then you have to decide what you can do right now to make the most out of a bad situation," she says.

Skene also points out it's physically impossible to retain an entire semester's worth of work into a short period of study, so it's necessary to focus on what has already been retained and attempt to reinforce it with key information.

"You have to sacrifice because you already have blown it. You can't know it all; you're never going to get it all in there," she insists.

As part of the series, workshops will provide ways of studying effectively and how to avoid the procrastination trap.

"Ideally, they should just be in the joyful position of just having to review. Of course we understand that isn't always the case.

"What we're going to be talking about is how to give people good exam-writing strategies," she says.

On Wednesday, Feb. 12 as part of the seminar series, MacCulloch will conduct Brain Gym, a concept developed in the 1970s by Dr. Paul Dennison. The copyrighted exercise regimen combines simple body movements and breathing exercises to stimulate the sort of brain activity required for optimum performance.