

RUM solar boat regains championship in Ohio competition ^[1]

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The UPRM Solar Boat team captained by Isabel Hernández Sáez, from INME, is composed of Miguel Estévez and Jancarlos Negrón, both from INME, and Sidney Serrano, from INEL.

The UPRM Solar Boat team, composed of students from the College of Engineering of the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez Campus (RUM), won the championship in the Solar Splash 2023 competition, which was recently held in Springfield, Ohio.

The collegiate collective, composed of four students from the departments of Electrical Engineering (INEL) and Computers (ICOM); and Mechanics (INME), obtained an overall score of

953.74 out of 1,000. With this feat, they regained the world championship title by winning the George Ettenheim Memorial trophy that they had achieved, for the first time, in 2021. Last year they were runners-up.

The team captained by Isabel Hernández Sáez, from INME, is composed of Miguel Estévez and Jancarlos Negrón, both from INME, and Sidney Serrano, from INEL. Mayagüez stood out among the nine participating universities, among them Cedarville University, which last year won the championship and, this time, took second place.

In addition to taking first place in the overall competition, the RUM ambassadors won seven other awards. Their boat won the Sprint competition by completing the 300-meter course in 25.8 seconds. They also took first place in the qualification event; in Slalom, which involves going around the course in tight turns as fast as possible; in outstanding craftsmanship; and in the video presentation. They achieved second place in the technical report and endurance events, by completing 69.25 laps on the 590-meter course.

"We are very pleased with our performance. This first place is undoubtedly due to the hard work and dedication of each of the team members over the past two semesters. As students, experiences like these are invaluable for our formation as future engineers. Working in this group allows us to put into practice the knowledge we acquired in class. We are deeply grateful for the dedication and constant commitment of our mentor and professor, Dr. Guillermo J. Serrano Rivera. Without his support, our performance would not be the same," said Hernández Sáez, team captain.

The Solar Splash allows for the exhibition of innovative solar-powered electric boat designs. Each university is represented by a team that spends the previous year designing, building and testing their solar boat. The students, typically three to a dozen or more on each team, spend the five days of the competition on the worksite or near the water while their boats compete. Pre-sailing boat inspections include safety checks and verification of batteries and certified radios for shore-based communication with the driver. The boats, driven by a single crew member, vary greatly in appearance, but must meet size, power and safety specifications. In fact, this time around, out of 12 teams entered, only nine managed to participate in the competition.

"I am extremely proud of our students and all their achievements in the competition. At a time when the University's resources have been drastically reduced, results like this show that we have to bet on our students," said Dr. Serrano, a professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and one of the group's advisors.

He thanked the sponsors of the champion group: General Motors, Sergeant & Lundy, Lockheed Martin, Chevron, Boeing, Abbott, the Industry Affiliates Program (IAP) and the RUM Department of Electrical Engineering.

Dr. Agustín Rullán Todo, RUM's president, congratulated the winning team.



"This triumph attests to the dedication, talent and perseverance of our students. This success is a testament to the hard work and collegiate excellence that goes in pursuit of innovation and the search for sustainable solutions. Congratulations to the entire team and their advisors! We at Mayagüez College are very proud of you and the impact you are making in the solar energy field," said the Chancellor.

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