

# Greater Interest in Government

*The purpose of the Greater Interest in Government Program, established in 1969 by Frederick A. Fawille, Illinois Beta '19, is to stimulate interest in civic affairs and public-policy issues among student members of Tau Beta Pi. The Executive Council awards annual grants up to \$750 each for these activities from the investment earnings of the Greater Interest in Government Fund.*

☞ Iowa Alpha ☞

## Roller-Coaster Competition

**a**PRIL 2005: IOWA ALPHA'S Greater Interest in Government Committee hosted the first annual Roller Coaster Competition. As part of this unique event, high-school and middle-school students were challenged to build roller coasters that would transport a ball from start to finish in 60 seconds. Roller coasters were also required to be constructed without prefabricated materials, fit within a four-foot cube, and successfully complete the "Rube Goldberg" challenge (placing a ping-pong ball through a hoop). During the actual competition, each team was judged according to the roller coaster's performance and theme and a presentation explaining engineering/physics concepts applied to the coaster.

In the end, more than 110 students and advisors crowded into Iowa State's Howe Hall for this exciting event. Each team did a wonderful job, and it was evident that students had spent months working on their roller coasters. Some coasters worked like a charm while some did not, but it was exciting to see engineering come to life for these students. With a gratifying response, the event was considered a great success and something that the students and members of the Tau Beta Pi Iowa Alpha Chapter will continue to look forward to in future years.

Tau Beta Pi provided \$545 for the project through a 2004-05 GIG Chapter Project Grant.

—Shannon M. Parker, Iowa Alpha '06  
Greater Interest in Government Chair

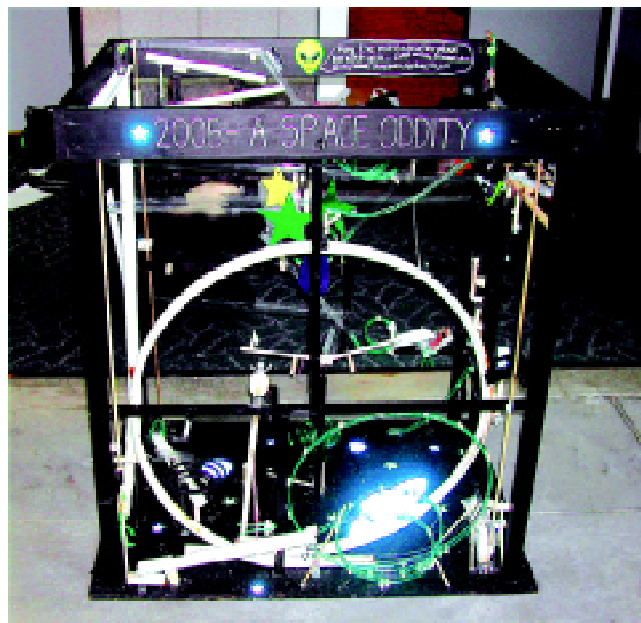


Figure 1: First place went to 2005—A Space Oddity. This was the top roller coaster in all areas of judging. Judging categories included technical (applied engineering concepts and reliability), theme, and presentation.

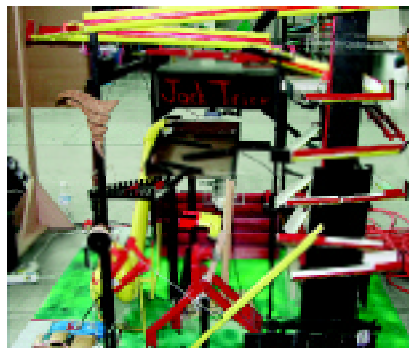


Figure 2: A roller coaster built with an Iowa State Cyclone theme.