

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**LAURENTIAN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING STUDENTS IN NASA COMPETITION
AND FEATURED ON DISCOVERY CHANEL**

SUDBURY, ON (May 2, 2011) - Laurentian University mechanical engineering students are one of two Canadian teams participating in the NASA lunabotics mining competition as part of their fourth-year project.

The “design it, build it, dig it” lunabotics competition is a university-level challenge designed to engage and retain students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The challenge is for students to design and build a remote controlled or autonomous excavator, called a lunabot that can collect and deposit a minimum of 10 kilograms of lunar simulant within 15 minutes. The complexities of the challenge include the abrasive characteristics of the lunar simulant, the weight and size limitations of the lunabot, and the ability to control the lunabot from a remote control center.

“The opportunities derived from this project are truly remarkable” says Myles Chisholm, a 4th year mechanical engineering student. “The valuable experiences gained in this project will allow all of us to take away the skills learned and apply them to future jobs”.

Taking part in this competition is Dr. Markus Timusk, assistant professor and mechanical engineering program coordinator, and 4th year mechanical engineering students: Stephane Chaisson, Drew Dewit, Greg Lakanen, Jeffrey Pagnutti, Myles Chisholm, Patrick Chartrand, Samuel Carriere, and Jean-Sebastien Sonier.

The past few months, has seen the team tweaking last minute details. “I’m surprised at how little needs to be changed or fixed. The design is essentially flawless,” says Greg Lakanen. “With most of the guys on our team born and raised in Sudbury and having worked in the mining industry, the concept of mining on the moon came fairly natural to us.”

Laurentian’s mechanical engineering team is one of only two Canadian universities, and the only university in Ontario to participate in the lunabotics competition. They will be heading to the Kennedy Space Center in Florida this spring for the competition. The Discovery Channel came to campus during reading week to film the mechanical engineering students working on the lunabot for a segment of Daily Planet to be aired May 2, 2011.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

For further information, please contact:
Joanne Musico – Manager, Communications
Laurentian University
705-675-1151 ext. 3445