

Why College is Important to Me

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Two broken axles, a severed motor belt, and a completely annihilated wheel were a few of the 'souvenirs' that I had tucked into my toolbox as I left my first combat robotics competition. Things had not gone quite as planned that weekend yet, somehow, I was thoroughly inspired and had already begun planning design improvements in my head. Though I did not walk away from the competition with a win, the knowledge I gained was invaluable and the experience solidified my desire to study engineering.

Building and preparing my first combat robot involved multiple iterations of drawings, modeling, and fabrication. It took many hours of wiring, soldering, testing, and fixing inevitable issues. Throughout the process I found myself seeking more information and learning a great deal about building and programming. It is my instinctive nature to seek knowledge and to dive thoroughly into in my interests. This year, as a high school junior, I began my first dual enrollment class, Calculus 2, at The Ohio State University. Having exhausted the math offerings at my high school, I was left with a strong desire to continue the progression. College is a critical piece of my journey as it is a source of important knowledge that I seek.

The beauty of combat robotics is that you have to prepare for the unexpected, sometimes modifying on the fly, and although you are competing against others, there is teamwork and camaraderie within the community. I learned a great deal by getting to know the other builders, my 'competitors,' who were open and willing to share advice and encouragement. As much as I love learning from others, I also love to share my excitement for

STEM. Whether I'm coaching the middle school Science Olympiad team or mentoring freshman students in math and computer science, I find joy in helping those around me explore and master technical concepts. I felt a similar connection sitting with classmates for the first time in my dual enrollment Calculus 2 recitation as we worked together on problem sets. Learning from each other's perspectives and passions is something that fuels me and something I look forward to doing on a larger scale as a full-time college student.

I am thankful to have been able to truly delve into my STEM related interests throughout my time in high school but I am not done yet and I know that college is an essential part of my journey. I hope to continue on this path of lifelong learning, building and innovation by pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering with a focus on robotics and artificial intelligence. Ultimately, I would like to use my passion for engineering to help combat our world's greatest challenges.