CSU students in Fort Collins chosen to help re-engineer Chevy Malibu

CSU has been chosen as one of 16 universities across the country to re-engineer a Chevrolet Malibu into a hybrid/electric or fuel-cell vehicle to reduce its environmental impact without compromising performance, safety and consumer acceptability.

Students at Colorado State University in Fort Collins will spend the next three years reengineering the GM sedan at the university's Motorsports Engineering Research Center and Engines and Energy Conversion Laboratory. The three-year collegiate competition is called “EcoCAR 2: Plugging into the Future.”

“This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to gain real-world, hands-on experience in the automotive engineering and clean-energy fields,” Thomas Bradley, assistant professor of mechanical engineering and lead faculty advisor for the CSU team said in a statement. “This project has great visibility with the automotive industry, and it provides an opportunity not only for our program, but for students who are seeking careers in the automotive field.”

Students will spend the first year developing the vehicle design. Years two and three will be spent converting, testing and integrating their designs. At the end of years two and three, the student vehicle prototypes will compete in a week-long competition of engineering tests, similar to tests GM conducts to determine a prototype’s readiness for production.

“Being selected for this competition is a result of the hard work that the students did to muster resources and write the proposal,” Bradley said. “This program builds on CSU’s decades of
experience in automotive and energy research. EcoCAR2 provides a great opportunity to represent CSU and show our students’ capabilities at a national level.”

The CSU Motorsports Engineering Research Center supports researchers in the fields of vehicle dynamics, vehicles structures and materials, vehicle aerodynamics, and powertrain system design and vehicle-level control. The Motorsport Engineering Research Center, located at CSU’s Foothills Campus, houses a suite of automotive engineering research infrastructure, classroom and collaborative design space, and dedicated student design infrastructure.

The Engines and Energy Conversion Laboratory, or EECL, is part of the College of Engineering’s Mechanical Engineering department. The lab is acknowledged as a world leader in developing large-scale solutions to global energy problems, with particular emphasis on engine technology, smart electric grids, advanced biofuels and energy technology for the developing world.

About EcoCAR 2

EcoCAR 2 is a three-year competition that builds on the 23-year history of DOE advanced vehicle technology competitions by giving engineering students the chance to design and build advanced vehicles that demonstrate cutting-edge automotive technologies.

General Motors provides production vehicles, vehicle components, seed money, technical mentoring and operational support. The DOE and its research and development facility, Argonne National Laboratory, will provide competition management, team evaluation and technical and logistical support.

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