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April 3, 2025



## SPECIAL FEATURE

Fairmont State's Robotics Club Participates in  
Regional Conferences



**Pictured here: Professor Musat Crihalmeanu and Falcotronix team members, from left to right: Jacob Bonner, Nathan Barham, Zachary Bulatko, Joseph Topardo, Jack Savage, Garrett Clayton, Musat Crihalmeanu, and Paul Lucas.**

As Fairmont State's Office of Sponsored Programs continues to release Special Features on various grant-funded programs and projects at the University, we enjoy broadening the Falcon community's understanding of sponsored awards on campus. This month we're featuring Falcotronix, the Robotics Club of Fairmont State University.

Professor Musat Crihalmeanu, Associate Professor of Electronic Engineering Technology and faculty mentor to Falcotronix, with the assistance of Dr. Todd Ensign, Program Manager of the NASA Education Resource Center (ERC) and Manager of the NASA Robotic Alliance, obtained a grant in June 2024 to support the club's participation in robotics competition and events. The funding, provided by the NASA WV Grant Consortium (WVSGC), enables Falcotronix students to learn about various aspects of STEM through hands-on interaction. Students build and program their own robots, which they use to complete tasks in competition with other teams at robotics tournaments.

Student attendance at these robotics events was enabled by the funding from NASA WVSGC. Dedicated to building research infrastructure and promoting STEM education in West Virginia, the WVSGC is a NASA-sponsored organization that supports STEM education endeavors throughout the state, including student organizations and higher education student projects in STEM. Support from WVSGC allowed club members to focus on their tasks of building and programming the robots and served as motivation to boost their performance to the highest level.

The latest event Falcotronix competed in was the 2025 VEX Robotics Competition, held February 21 at West Virginia University. During this competition, twelve teams at the university level demonstrated their coding and engineering skills for a chance to qualify for

upcoming state and regional tournaments.

Falcotronix faced fierce competition against multiple strong teams who came from West Virginia, New Jersey, New York, and Maryland to participate in this competition. Even dealing with these difficult opponents, the Falcotronix team managed to beat the Rochester Institute of Technology team with a final score of 34 - 33 and got the Tournament Finalists Award.

Earlier, the Falcotronix team found success while competing in the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) VEX U Robotics Tournament held February 14 in La Plata, Maryland. At this tournament, nine robotics teams competed against each other and Falcotronix won ten out of twelve matches, putting them in second place in the competition.

The team also won the Design Award in two out of four events. This is a prestigious designation given to teams that, beyond winning matches, have an organized, professional approach to the engineering design process and create innovative robots.

OSP is very proud to announce that **the Falcotronix Robotics Club qualified for the 2025 VEX-U Robotics World Championships!**

This is the third consecutive time that Falcotronix qualified for this prestigious international competition, which is reserved for the best 100 teams in the whole world and will take place in Dallas, TX in May 2025.

As the Falcotronix Robotics Club prepares for the VEX-U World Championships, Professor Crihalmeanu and his team continue to work on the complex process of improving the robots and their programming routines to prevail in their fight for excellence and distinction in robotics.

Anyone who would like to assist with, learn more about, or sponsor the Falcotronix Club at Fairmont State should contact Professor Musat Crihalmeanu by emailing [mcrihalmeanu@fairmontstate.edu](mailto:mcrihalmeanu@fairmontstate.edu)

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#### **SPECIAL NOTE:**

Any grant application, proposal, or request for external funding must be reviewed and approved **prior to submission** through an internal process managed by the Office of Sponsored Programs. Please *visit our website* for more information and to access the required forms which facilitate the internal review and approval process.



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