

Gracious professionalism is a term that means nothing to most people, but for Vex competitors, it's the combination of sportsmanship, altruism and social interaction that defines our experiences in robotics. Before the introduction of the vex competition into New Zealand, students were restricted in their access to opportunities to participate in all areas of robotics. Our experience would be limited to playing with robotic toys, rather than being able to design, construct and program our own robots. The vex program has not only introduced a new conduit for technological creativity and sparked interest in mechatronics, but it has made robotics synonymous with competition and community.

One of the strengths of the vex competition is that it is near impossible for a team to win by themselves. In doing this, alliances have to be formed between teams, even off the playing field and during the rest of the season. Having regular scrimmages has created a strong camaraderie within not only each individual team, but between rival schools and across socio-economic barriers. Everyone in our team has made lasting friendships with competitors that we have met, and have become encouraged and inspired to make a career out of robotics.

Developing skills in the field of robotics and competing in events are only some of the benefits that the vex program has brought to our regional community. The real reward has been meeting like-minded people and creating networks that will last for the rest of our lives.

Andrew Chen

Team 2919a

Kristin School, New Zealand