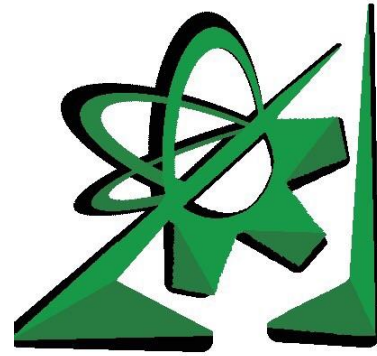


66661A

Innovating the
Future

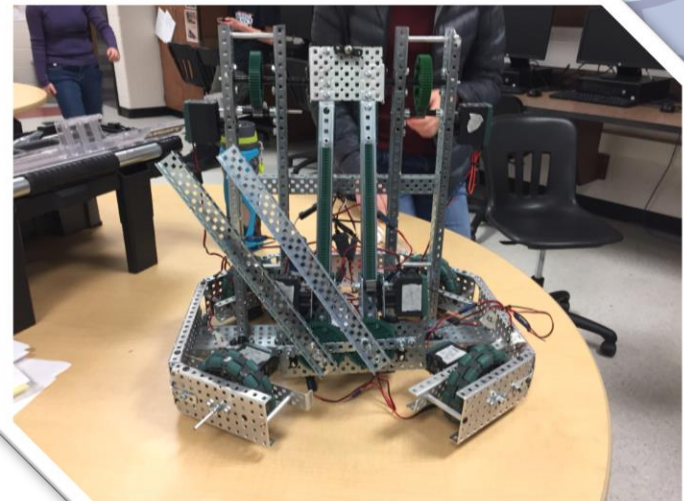
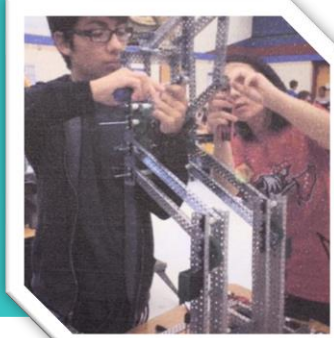


I is for the Introduction

Long before the Innovators became a team, Frances and Jessica were part of TEAM SUPERIOR- the first all-girls and 6th-grade team at Gainesville Middle School that qualified for States through skills and the Design award starting with the “Toss Up” season. Because of our age and gender, many others lacked faith in the possibility of success for our team, but Mr. Powell, the coach, was the only person to believe in us. He taught us the importance of team dynamics and always giving others a chance. We learned to collaborate with other teams and give back to the community by volunteering at host schools.



N is for Not Believing



Despite the success from middle-school, high-school was a different story. The males in our co-ed team dismissed the value of our accomplishments and claimed that it was attributed to being females therefore people “felt sorry for us” and awarded us more. The coach didn’t think we could handle cutting metal and the males gave us smaller tasks like scouting and notebook while they drove and built. But, these challenges made us stronger. They became our drive for aiding and encouraging others that had been in the same shoes to keep fighting for their passions.

N is for Never Giving Up

Riley, Frances, Abby, Jessica, and Temi participated in programs like Women in Technology (at BAE systems), Women in Engineering (PLTW), a trip to the Pentagon, and Women in Engineering Day (Lockheed Martin). They solidified our value in society by introducing us to internship opportunities, letting us experience hands-on projects like building Rube Goldberg machines, and teaching us CAD. These programs were able to shine light to the meaning of "Girl Powered". It taught us the importance of inclusivity and revealed that every single person- no matter their age, sex, race, or class- has potential.

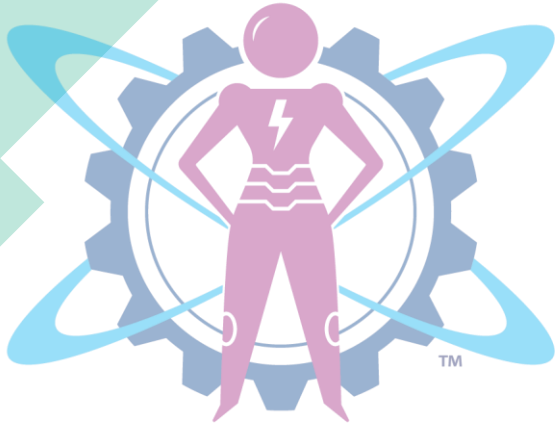


O is for Our Hopes and Dreams



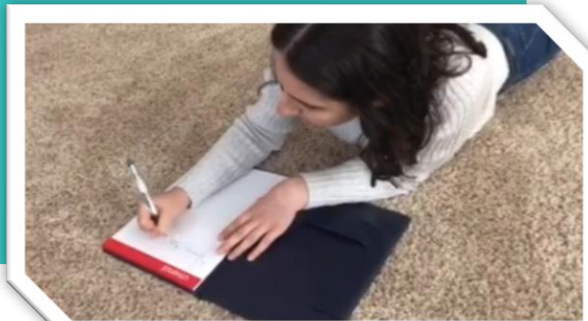
Bouncing off of the programs, Frances, Jessica, and Richard started a VEX Robotics team with our math professor, Mr. Chouikha, at The Governor's School @ Innovation Park in 2019 to reach out to 14 different schools and 3 counties that are part of The Governor's School. We wanted to bring VEX back to those that couldn't afford it financially or lacked the time commitment. Starting the team was a long and arduous process- we originally fundraised the money ourselves to eliminate team dues- taking 6 months to gain enough money to register.





V is for Voicing Our Ideas

We drew in students interested in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, Engineering, and Research. With a plethora of different skills, each individual was able to shine in their specialties. The new team became a safe-zone for voicing ideas. Our dedication to sticking to our mission allowed us to let “minorities” take lead.



A is for All Together



Abby Seputro: Head of Public Relations

“I’ve always felt comfortable with public speaking and found it easy to connect with those around me. This led me to become a part of public relations. Because of this experience, I’ve been able to understand the importance of making an impact in social media.”



Riley Turbak: Head of Online Challenge

“Having taken 5 online courses in the past and having experience with coding websites from scratch, I’ve had the most experience with online programs and decided to specialize in online challenges. But because this is my first year in VEX, I still have a lot of roles to explore before I truly settle down.”



Frances Truong: Co-Captain, Head of Notebook, Head of CAD

“Being experienced in various programs like SeaPerch and PLTW while loving art, I focused on CAD and the Notebook. These experiences led me to realizing my dream of becoming a Marine Engineer.”



Jessica Truong: Head of Build

“I love to work with my hands. Before VEX, I baked and performed metal work so I naturally was drawn to building. Now with 7 years, I can quickly improvise when a physical problem arises.”



Temidayo Akinbi: Builder, CAD Team

“Aspiring to be an aerospace engineer, I’ve participated in multiple summer opportunities that allowed me to gain experience with building and propulsion calculations. Having been in VEX for multiple years, I’ve gravitated towards CADing and building. “



Richard Kim: Captain

“Working with ladies is definitely advantageous. They tend to notice small details and catch any building or programming mistakes.”



Shiva Manandhar: Programmer

“Sometimes it’s harder to agree on a solution when we’re all so different but that let’s us have more time to make better decisions- similar to a checks-and-balances system.”

Mohit Sharma: Programmer

“Collaborating with girls is a whole different experience. They push us guys to rethink our decisions and are never afraid to challenge us if they think we’re wrong.”



Josh De Vera: Head Programmer

“By having team members coming from a variety of backgrounds, we’ve been able to have at least one expert in solving a problem no one else understood.”



Terrance Luangrath: Public Relations, Builder

“I like having a team full of different kinds people because it really lets me become more open-minded and understand other’s situations which lets me understand the world as a whole.”



We now volunteer at local robotics events and schools- teaching students basic VEX tips and most importantly, inclusion and team dynamics. We work with teams that struggle with communication or face discrimination. We also compete in more STEM programs to bring female and minority representation.

T is for Things We Do Together



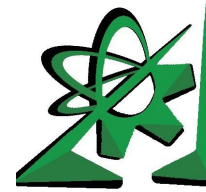
E is for Even More Inclusion

Now that we've started the Innovators, we hope to bring VEX to even more people around the area by expanding our club and letting minority voices be heard in STEM. We plan on giving back to the community even more by volunteering at local robotics events, schools, STEM programs, and fundraising for STEM extracurriculars as a thanks for helping us realize our true potentials and giving us the necessary stepping-stones for starting our program. We hope that The Innovators will inspire other dreamers, future inventors, and passionate workers to keep fighting and remember that we all innovate the future.



Innovating the Future

Team: 66661A
The Innovators



It's Time to
Innovate and
let...
ALL TAKEOVER

Author: Jessica Truong