

New Virtual RobotX Competition Uses a Simulation Environment to Enhance the Performance of Autonomous Vehicles

RoboNation partners with the Naval Postgraduate School and Open Robotics

ARLINGTON, VA — March 18, 2019 — RoboNation, in partnership with the Naval Postgraduate School and Open Robotics, announced today that applications are now being accepted for the Virtual RobotX Competition (VRX). Sponsored by the Office of Naval Research (ONR), the VRX competition is an international, university-level effort designed to broaden students' exposure to autonomy and maritime robotic technologies.

In the VRX competition, student teams will operate their vehicle in a Gazebo-based simulation environment built by Open Robotics and the Naval Postgraduate School. Students will be tasked to develop innovative solutions to ensure their virtual Unmanned Surface Vehicle (USV) can perform prescribed tasks in this environment. Tasks for this competition have been derived from RoboNation's Maritime RobotX Challenge.

Robotic teams from around the world are encouraged to apply for the VRX competition. As part of the application process, teams will provide information on their **past history** in robotic competitions and the **impact** they hope to achieve by competing in VRX.

Applications are being accepted at <https://robonation.submittable.com/submit/134218/virtual-robotx-application>.

Student teams will be notified of their acceptance on **April 15**. To compete, accepted teams will be required to submit a registration and \$300 USD registration fee. Top performers of the VRX competition will be eligible for prizes.

Access all rules and supporting documents, simulation environment and forum on the [VRX site](#).

"This is a very unique simulation environment and one that we are excited about creating," according to Carlos Agüero, Research Engineer at Open Robotics. "We are very excited to see how the teams perform with their simulated USVs."

"The Virtual RobotX competition, as part of the larger Maritime RobotX Program, is designed to give students the opportunity to improve their vehicles' performance," says RoboNation Executive Director Daryl Davidson. "The solutions the teams develop in the VRX competition will aid their performance when competing in a real-world environment at the biennial RobotX Challenge, to be held in Hawaii in 2020."

Important Dates:

March	Preliminary Rules & Scoring Released
March	Software v1.0 Released
March 15	Application Opens
March 25-29	Student Feedback Call
April 7	Application Closes
April 15	Announce Accepted Teams
April 15	Open Registration
April 30	Close Registration
May	Student Feedback Call
June	Final Rules & Scoring Released
September	Qualifiers
November	Semi-Finals
December	Finals

About RoboNation

RoboNation is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide a pathway of hands-on educational experiences that empower students to find innovative solutions to global challenges. We envision a world where technology unites people to learn, share and create. More information on RoboNation is available at www.robonation.org or following along online @AUVSIFoundation.

About Open Robotics

Open Robotics is an independent non-profit organization founded by members of the global robotics community. The mission of Open Robotics is to support the development, distribution, and adoption of open source software for use in robotics research, education, and product development. Working with our global community, we offer two open source products: ROS and Gazebo. Program your robots with ROS and simulate them with Gazebo. More information on Open Robotics is available at www.openrobotics.org or by following the company @OpenRoboticsOrg.

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