

NEWS RELEASE

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NIA AND NASA ANNOUNCE STUDENT ENGINEERING COMPETITION

HAMPTON, Va. – Attention college students - a competition sponsored by NASA and the National Institute of Aerospace (NIA) want your engineering ideas. The result is that your design could become part of an actual space project.

The 2010 Revolutionary Aerospace Systems Concepts Academic Linkage or RASC-AL contest is aimed at undergraduate and graduate engineering students.

"NASA is always looking for great ideas. What better group to turn to than the next generation of engineers?" said Pat Troutman, senior systems analyst at NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton, Va. "Students get something out of it too. They get chance to apply what they learn in class to real world aerospace challenges."

Students can choose one of four themes for their project: a lunar outpost design that will help reduce risk for future human missions to Mars; a technology-enabled human Mars mission; novel concepts to engage the general public in human exploration missions; or system designs that provide cost-effective exploration with minimal infrastructure. Each student teams is invited to submit a summary of their proposed projects and an educational outreach plan by February 5, 2010.

The RASC-AL steering committee made up of NASA and industry experts will evaluate proposals and select as many as ten undergraduate and five graduate teams to compete against each other at a forum next June in Florida.

"NIA is excited to once again collaborate with NASA on the RASC-AL design competition," said Dr. Robert Lindberg, NIA president and executive director. "Students will gain valuable experience working in a team environment and presenting their projects to peers, industry experts and NASA."

Selected teams must submit a written report, prepare a poster and give an oral presentation at the RASC-AL forum. The June forum gives faculty and students the chance to meet with NASA and industry experts, introduce concepts and data from the competition into NASA exploration program planning, develop relationships that could lead to participation in other NASA student research programs and show the benefits of NASA-university-industry cooperation.

For more information about the 2010 Revolutionary Aerospace Systems Concepts Academic Linkage competition, please go to:

<http://www.nianet.org/rascal>

For more information about the National Institute of Aerospace, please go to:

<http://www.NIAnet.org>.