

International Accolades for Engineering Majors

Three of our engineering undergraduates, Gilbert Pinkett (an HHMI STEM STAR), Jalen Hunter, and Clerkson Ngolle, have been accepted to present their research at the prestigious International Astronautical Congress (IAC), one of the foremost conferences in space research.

The IAC takes place in Milan, Italy, this October 2024 and brings together researchers from across the globe to showcase their work. The competition to present here is intense, with submissions from undergraduates, graduates, postdocs, and academic professionals representing institutions like MIT, NASA, and Harvard.

Out of 7,000 abstract submissions, our students' work stood out and secured a coveted spot at the conference. For those of you looking for summer beach reading, their abstract is entitled, *Innovative Human-Operated Planetary Surface Exploration Smart Tool for Artemis Lunar Mission*.

Their invitation to this Congress is testament to the caliber of research and talent within the UMES engineering program. It highlights the exceptional abilities and dedication of our students in contributing to the field of space research on a global scale. Their success reflects positively not only on them but also on UMES as a whole.

Dr. Aaron Persad, formerly at MIT, is one of those who encourages and supports these outstanding students. Last fall, he led a UMES research team that soared above and beyond into the stars aboard Virgin Galactic's Galactic 05 spaceship. The payload launched in that mission was designed by Dr. Persad to test how confined fluid behaves in a low-gravity environment. He's also involved in research ranging from how to harvest water from the Moon to support long-duration human space missions to the performance of organic-based solar cells in the stratosphere, to the testing the next generation of space suits.