

Mexicans win 2 NASA challenge awards



The Iktan Roving team have won the Ingenuity Award and Crash and Burn Award at the 2023 NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge.

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Marianne Ocón

IKTAN Roving, a team made up of undergraduate **students** from [Tec de Monterrey's Cuernavaca campus](#), [has won](#) the ***Ingenuity Award*** and ***Crash and Burn Award*** at the 2023 [NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge](#).

The **29th NASA engineering competition** was held at the [U.S. Space & Rocket Center](#) in Huntsville, Alabama, **United States**, between April 20 and 22.

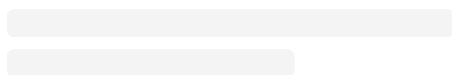
This **event** brought together more than **500 students** from around the **world**, who put their **rovers** to the test in a half-mile **obstacle course**, which simulated **space terrain** and required teams to **complete multiple alien terrain exploration tasks**.

Iktan Roving, participating for the eleventh time, **won** prizes for **demonstrating** the **best collaborative spirit** and **leadership** throughout the competition, as well as for the **ability to react** with **resilience** when **overcoming** a **major failure** during the race.

Last year, this Mexican team won first place in this tournament.



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The 2023 NASA challenge

The competition **involves** teams **designing, building,** and **testing** a **rover driven** by two pilots (one male and one female), which is capable of **traversing challenging terrain** and has the **tools** necessary to **complete various missions**.

This year, the **track** included a **new circuit** of the [U.S. Space & Rocket Center](#) base, with new **obstacles** that increased its **difficulty**, and missions aimed at **collecting liquid samples** and maintaining the **quality** of the source.

To do so, **the drivers used** a **multipurpose tool designed** by the team, which **won the most points** for its **speed** and **precision** when **collecting** samples **without contaminating them**.

“We were able to stand out in all the tests and won two awards for our great performance.” - David García.

*“Despite **not repeating a place on the podium** for having one of the best times on the track (due to a broken tire), we were able to **stand out in all** the tests and won **two awards** for our **performance**”,* explained David García, engineering professor and team mentor.



The IKTAN Roving team

This **year**, the **participating Cuernavaca campus team** was made up of **40 engineering and business students**, **22 of whom traveled** to the United States.

Participation by the Cuernavaca campus team has been an **unbroken tradition** since **2013**.

“Having a winning rover is something to be very proud of.” - Ian Doring

*“The **awards** we won **represent** the **potential** and **character** of TEC **students**; having a **winning rover** which beat more than **30 international teams** is something to be very **proud** of,”* shared Ian Doring, student and team driver.

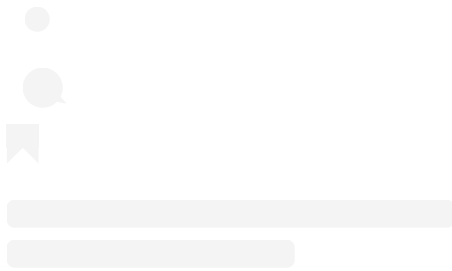
This team is **coordinated** by the **School of Engineering and Sciences** at the Cuernavaca campus and is led by David García, a mechatronics professor at the campus.

*“Getting **recognition** from **other teams** and your own teammates is the **greatest reward** there is; it’s about knowing that what you do **has an impact** on **someone** else and **inspires** them to do things,”* said Abraham Vega, a member of the team.



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A team with a history of success

IKTAN, which means **ingenious** in **Maya**, has obtained the following **awards** since 2013:

- [**Ingenuity Award**](#) (2022, 2023)
- **Crash and Burn Award** (2023)
- Overall Winner (first place, 2022)
- [**Overall Winner**](#) (second place, 2021)
- STEM Engagement Award (2021)
- [**AIAA Telemetry/Electronics Award**](#) (2014, 2016, and 2020)
- **Jesco von Puttkamer International Team Award** (2016, 2017, and 2019)
- **Team Spirit Award** (2018)
- Frank Joe Sexton Memorial Pit Crew Award (2017)

In the words of student **Ariel Calderón**, the team's **previous successes** have allowed them to "**learn** about what our team did in **previous years** and **seek** to **improve for** future competitions by adding to our knowledge bank."

"We **follow** the **path** of those who **came before us** and **create new paths** for those who come after," he concluded.



The NASA space competition

The [NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge \(HERC\)](#) is one of **eight [Artemis Student Challenges](#)** and reflects the goals of the **Artemis program**, which **aims** to put the **first woman** and first person of color on the Moon.

It also aims **to encourage** young people to **study** degrees in STEM (**science, technology, engineering, and mathematics**) fields.

The **challenge set** for the **competition** is to get the **rover to navigate a half-mile track with obstacles** and accomplish **missions** to **collect** liquid and solid samples from **the alien terrain**.

This year, more than **500 students** from all over the **world** participated, representing countries such as the United States, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, India, Mexico, Peru, and Singapore.

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