

Engineering Students Earn Top Prize at CREATE Symposium



Youseff Jalwaj-Soubai, left, and Abdullah Qureshi work on their automated paper ream opener, which won top prize at the 2023 CREATE Symposium. (Photo by Jonathan Muckell)

By [Michael Parker \(mailto:mparker@albany.edu?subject=UAlbany%20News%20Story\)](mailto:mparker@albany.edu?subject=UAlbany%20News%20Story)

ALBANY, N.Y. (May 2, 2023) — Three [College of Engineering and Applied Sciences \(https://www.albany.edu/ceas\)](https://www.albany.edu/ceas) students have been honored for their work in developing solutions to aid workers living with disabilities at the annual CREATE Symposium.

Seniors Mazin Chater, Youseff Jalwaj-Soubai and Abdullah Qureshi partnered with the Center for Disability Services (CDS) in Albany to create an automated paper ream opener. Their device design earned top prize among the 10 competing colleges and universities at symposium, held on April 24, including a check for \$15,000.



(http://www.albany.edu/news-center/engineering-students-earn-top-prize-create-symposium/)
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“It’s exciting to showcase what we’ve been working on,” Chater said in an interview with Spotlight News. “It’s going to help real people in a real workplace, I think it adds way more meaning than just the engineering aspect.”

The competition, hosted by NYSID (New York State Industries for the Disabled), provides a forum for college students across New York to display their specialized inventions to help people with disabilities.



From left, Abdullah Quereshi, Mazin Chater and Youseff Jalwaj-Soubai celebrate after winning top prize at the 2023 CREATE Competition. (Photo by Jonathan Muckell)

CREATE (Cultivating Resources for Employment with Assistive Technology) is a program designed by NYSID which invites students to develop assistive technologies for New Yorkers with disabilities as a way to remove barriers in the workplace. This is the ninth year of the competition.

State agencies work with the students in the development of specific devices to meet the needs of their respective workforce.

Electrical and Computer Engineering (<https://www.albany.edu/ece>)

Professor of Practice Jonathan Muckell has helped oversee UAlbany's student challengers for several years, often partnering with CDS in the effort.

In 2022, the team of Michael L. George, Joseph Salgado and Guillermo Mijancos also took first place for their paper shredder bypass system (<https://www.albany.edu/ceas/engineering-solutions-people-living-disabilities>), which helped CDS hire more employees to work at their mail fulfillment center.

"There are great relationships between the agencies and colleges," said Maureen O'Brien, President and CEO of NYSID at the CREATE Symposium.

O'Brien noted high rates of unemployment among people living with disabilities in New York and how the student-led teams have created solutions to overcome this problem.

"If we can come up with ways that they can be more competitive and productive and in the workplace more efficiently, it's a great way to get people to work," said O'Brien, praising the students' efforts (<https://wnyt.com/top-stories/ualbany-students-win-big-in-science-symposium/>).

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