



Media Release

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Students respond to stringent fuel economy standards and vehicle safety requirements with new automotive technologies

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 3, 2014

Toronto, ON:

An eco-driving training program helped a University of Toronto student win a national automotive research competition Dec. 2. Turuna Seecharan, a post-doctoral fellow, won the AUTO21 TestDRIVE competition, receiving a \$7,000 prize for her work on reducing carbon emissions through eco-driving techniques. Eco-driving techniques can reduce fuel consumption by 10 per cent on average, thereby reducing carbon dioxide emissions and mitigating rising fuel and maintenance costs for commercial fleets.

Seecharan's research utilizes simulator-based eco-driving training for fleet drivers to encourage drivers to adopt fuel-efficient driving behaviour. Research results show that a simulator-based eco-driving training program can improve the driving behaviour of fleet drivers, lead to a sustained improvement in driving behaviour and encourage a high-level of motivation in drivers to learn eco-driving techniques. Seecharan works under the supervision of Dr. Andrew Jardine, professor emeritus of industrial engineering at the University of Toronto.

The AUTO21 TestDRIVE competition showcased leading edge technologies and automotive knowledge developed in part by Canadian university graduate students. As Canada's automotive research program, AUTO21 provides funding to 38 applied R&D projects at 48 universities across the country. More than 400 students contribute to these projects, along with nearly 200 academic researchers. Since its establishment in 2001, AUTO21 has supported more than 2,500 graduate student researchers with federal and private-sector funding.

"It is important to connect Canada's scientific strength to the marketplace and help our excellent new graduates build their careers here where they were educated," said Dr. Peter Frise, Scientific Director and CEO of AUTO21. "AUTO21's TestDRIVE competition showcases our nation's strong academic and public sector scientific knowledge creation capacity, which is essential in augmenting Canada's innovation agenda, creating high value jobs and strengthening a vital part of the nation's manufacturing base."

TestDRIVE was hosted in partnership with the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters and held in conjunction with the annual all-member meeting of the Ontario Council of Manufacturing Executives in Toronto, Ont.

"TestDRIVE is a leading competition in addressing the demands of global competition on Canada's automotive sector," said CME President and CEO Jayson Myers. "The rigours of the competition to ensure that innovations and technological advancements can be quantifiable, leading to development and commercialization of adoptable, practical solutions help to maintain Canada's vital leadership role in the automotive sector."

In addition to the \$7,000 prize, a \$3,500 prize was awarded to Kinga Eliaz of McMaster University for her research on an in-car recording device that quantifies changes in actual on-road driving behaviour in older drivers.

AUTO21 supports research projects in six key areas: health, safety and injury prevention; societal issues; materials and manufacturing; design processes; powertrains, fuels and emissions; and intelligent systems and sensors. A recent independent economic impact study of AUTO21 projects estimates that Network research is generating more than \$1.1 billion in economic and social benefits to Canada. AUTO21 is supported by the Government of Canada through a Networks of Centres of Excellence program, and its administrative centre is hosted by the University of Windsor.

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