

-Executive Summary

Team Mission Statement

FIRST Team 2996 Cougars Gone Wired strives to combine a constant pursuit of knowledge with a commitment to the community and the expansion of FIRST. We strive to be a role model for other teams by focusing on building students while building robots, having fun while working hard, and doing our best while helping others.

Team Origin

Please provide the date that your team formed, the location of your team, the current number of team members (highlighting any growth over past years) and describe the challenges the team had to overcome in order to participate in *FIRST* events. (1600 characters allowed, including spaces and punctuation)

In August of 2008, Mr. Bryce McLean, mathematics and engineering teacher at Coronado High School (CHS), nine mentors, and thirty-four Colorado Springs School District 11 (CSSD11) students, established FIRST Robotics Team 2996, Cougars Gone Wired. The Technology Building at Coronado High School serves as home and base for the growth and development of the team. Cougars Gone Wired has since expanded throughout the Pikes Peak Region, recruiting thirty-nine dedicated students for the 2016 season.

In past years, Team 2996 has had to overcome many obstacles. During the team's second season, in 2009, the head coach and mentor Mr. Bryce McLean underwent major heart surgery, and as a result he was absent for the critical months prior to build season. In the summer of 2012 the Waldo Canyon Fire, one of the most devastating fires in Colorado history, affected many team members' homes putting Coronado High School at risk. In the August of 2014, one of the beloved founding mentors, Dr. John Wood, and his wife were lost in a tragic plane crash. This was very hard for the older members who had formed very close relationships with him. At the same time, Mr. McLean was offered a promotion at Jenkins Middle School as vice-principle, and as a result had to step down as head-coach. To overcome these losses both student leadership and mentors had to take on new responsibilities in order to help the new head coach Mr. Gary Hilty. Mr. McLean's passion for teaching, and his continued support for the team, returned him to CHS as a teacher and head coach for the 2016 season.

Organizational Structure

Please detail how the team is structured to 1) Raise funds; 2) Ensure funds are properly spent; 3) Find and engage sponsors; 4) Recruit team members/mentors for current & future seasons; 5) Ensure FIRST principles remain core to the team's efforts. Uploading an image of your team organizational chart below, will also satisfy this requirement. (1600 characters allowed, including spaces and punctuation. Graphic image allowed in addition to or as an alternative to text - upload 5" x 4" 100 dpi resolution images that end in .JPG or .GIF)

The majority of the team's revenue comes from STEM-related corporate sponsors. The team raises money through collaborative fundraisers, including FIRST Green e-watt saver lightbulbs. During the 2016 build season, Cougars Gone Wired continued selling Old Chicago Pizza Palz cards.

CSSD11 manages team expenditures. They ensure that funds are properly spent by requiring itemized and specific financial records. Coaches justify expenses to the district with input from student leaders and mentors.

The team connects with potential sponsors through mentors, parents, and community events. Leadership coordinates an interview process to determine presentation team membership. This group of students then presents to potential sponsors to detail the team's successes, to explain FIRST's mission, and to seek financial support.

Mentors are often acquired through these presentations. As noted in the "Relationships" section, the majority of student recruitment occurs at Coronado registration, community events, and the annual barbecue.

The FIRST experience inspires learning and growth as a team and as a business; encouragement of student enthusiasm for STEM remains the highest priority. The team maintains a "student-led" and "mentor-guided" operation. The "hands-off" mentor policy encourages student STEM growth. To ensure an even distribution of tasks and to create an environment for personal growth and well-rounded members, the team requires both business and technical sub-team participation.

Relationships

Please detail team efforts to specifically engage, inspire, educate and retain 1) Team members; 2) Mentors; 3) Sponsors/Community. (1600 characters allowed, including spaces and punctuation)

Off-season is dedicated to student-organized community activities: demonstrations with the public library system, science festivals, charity walks, and Elks Lodge community dinners. The team has also gotten involved in wildfire damage mitigation and reparation.

CGW recruitment takes place at community events, the CHS registration, as well as the yearly barbeque. During off-season, meetings focus on team building, train incoming members in their given sub-teams, and afterwards, members go to Pie Rush Wednesday at Village Inn for further bonding and free pie. The team feels strongly about keeping in touch with alumni. To do this, every year the team has a cake party, an event in which the whole team, old and new, gathers to bake and decorate a cake that is eaten at Kickoff.

The team's supportive and dedicated mentors are comprised of alumni, parents, and various engineer volunteers. They share their knowledge and experience, all while being as "hands-off" as possible so that the students can create their own experiences.

To interact with other FRC teams, Team 2996 hosts the Pre-Ship Scrimmage, an event in which teams from all over the state are invited to play the FIRST game in a competition-like environment. CGW takes the field that is built and sets it every Saturday for any teams to practice on. The team also invites others to observe our mock game, a three day activity in November that shows new members what Build Season will resemble.

Sponsors allow CGW to experience FIRST in return for being invited to events, and featured on team shirts as well as the robot.

Deployment of Resources

Please detail how the resources of your team (Financial or otherwise) have been deployed to 1) Engage the community to spread the message of FIRST; 2) Inspire others to get involved so that FIRST continues to grow; 3) Ensure all team members get the most out of their FIRST experience. (1600 characters allowed, including spaces and punctuation)

The team's connections have multiplied over its eight years, enabling the acquisition of resources and expansion of impact. The most valuable resource is the membership of 39 students and 18 mentors which is dedicated to giving demos, mentoring younger students, and volunteering. Participation in Coronado High School events and work with national service programs attracts new audiences. At demos and festivals, the team encourages kids to drive the robots and engages in conversations with children, parents, and professionals to educate and attract them to the FIRST community.

Cougars Gone Wired started the first 5 Jr. FLL teams in southern Colorado, and has expanded to 12 teams across 4 elementary schools. To each team a 2996 member offers technical support and advice on program sustainability. Cougars Gone Wired donates resources to start these teams, and volunteers time to run the annual Southern Colorado Jr. FLL Showcase. In 2010, FTC Team 3635 was welcomed into the Cougars Gone Wired family. Since then, the team has mentored an FTC team, and hosted a 2014 FTC Qualifier.

Team members are required to participate on business and technical sub-teams. This distribution of intellectual resources has proven to engage students, teach practical skills, and prepare for future careers. By financing trips, team shirts, shop materials and entrance fees with sponsor donations and fundraisers, members pay only a low joining fee, and substantially reduced trip prices. This enables members to attend competitions and makes FIRST an accessible opportunity for all.

Future Plans

Please indicate specific plans the team has for the next 3 years in regards to sponsorship, team and community outreach (including helping FIRST grow) and detail how you expect to be able to accomplish these goals. (1600 characters allowed, including spaces and punctuation)

The finance sub team will complete fundraising and business submissions in the 2016 off-season to increase robot build involvement. General leadership aspires to implement new solutions for team communication. The team began selling “Geared for Greatness” water bottles during the 2015 build season and doubled the initial investment. It hopes to expand this line of products to increase fundraising variety and profit.

The team will finalize all plans for the middle school level robotics summer camp. Later expanding the summer camps to more levels, and have it as a sustainable source of revenue for future years. This would also allow the team to fundraise before the school year began.

The scouting team will continue with a paperless system to optimize the match scouting system and make it green. Cougars Gone Wired is exploring the possibilities of sponsorships with technology companies such as Google for donations of Chromebooks or tablets to help initiate this system.

Better the new-member training workshops and leadership seminars to further develop the student mentor program introduced in the 2014 off-season. Especially in the website and social media, electronics, programming, and systems integration sub-teams.

Financial Statement

Please include information on team finances (include financial statement detailing income and expenditures). Uploading an image of your team financial plan below, will also satisfy this requirement. (1600 characters allowed, including spaces and punctuation. Graphic image allowed in addition to or as an alternative to text – upload 5" x 4" 100 dpi resolution images that end in .JPG or .GIF)

The following are the estimated expenditures for the 2016 season. There was a 4% decrease in cost from the previous year due to parent volunteers driving the team to the Arizona Regional.

Entrance Fees	Arizona Regional	\$ 4,000
	Colorado Regional	\$ 5,000
	Championship (Tentative)	\$ 5,000
Lodging	Arizona Regional Hotel	\$ 5,300
	Colorado Regional Hotel	\$ 3,800
	Championship Hotel (Tentative)	\$ 7,500
Transportation	Bus for Championship (Tentative)	\$ 7,000
	Robot Materials (Prototype, Practice, Competition)	\$ 5,300
Build Season	Field Materials	\$ 2,000
	Miscellaneous	\$ 2,500
	FIRST Outreach	\$ 400
Community Outreach	Local Outreach	\$ 300
	Total	\$ 48,100

Risk Analysis

Please describe the team's risk mitigation plan. Present a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis or narrative that describes the team plan to identify and respond to sustainability threats. (1600 characters allowed, including spaces and punctuation)

Strengths: 18 mentors including engineers, industry professionals, business owners, and educators; definition of leadership roles; involving parents and utilizing parent skill sets; strong, positive FRC reputation; featured Coronado High School program; 39 members of gender, age, ethnic, and skill diversity; family atmosphere; facilities including wood and metal shops, community room, computer labs on integrated network, aux gym for practice field and events, catering room for Cougar Kibble

Weaknesses: Developing additional corporate sponsors; fundraising; developing future business and technical leadership; improving transition of VPs; communication for events and meetings

Opportunities: increasing interest in STEM and FIRST especially in younger generations; women in engineering resources; promoting Gracious Professionalism outside of robotics; leadership skill development; scholarships, internships, networking; new member mentoring program

Threats: Economy's effect on sponsor resources; effects of FTC team loss; coaching turnover and changes.

Risk Mitigation Plan: The above analysis mandated a collaboration of students, coaches and mentors to strategize methods for tackling program risk while growing success and maintaining strengths of leadership and diversity, including increasing the female to male ratio of students and mentors, and attracting additional mentors. This sustainability work group is responsible for planning future fund development and building relationships with community STEM partners.

