

## Executive Summaries Draft 2024

**Describe the impact of the *FIRST* program on team participants within the last 3 years. This can include but is not limited to percentages of those graduating high school, attending college, in STEM careers, and in *FIRST* programs as mentors/sponsors.**

In the past three years, 100% of our alumni have graduated high school and 90% go onto a college or technical university. 94% of Cougars Gone Wired alumni who attend college go on to major in a STEM field, and 100% of our current seniors plan to major in a STEM field. Six of our most recent graduates serve as FRC team mentors. **328**

**Describe your community along with how your team addresses its unique opportunities and circumstances.**

We are from Colorado Springs, where 55% of students in our school qualify for free or reduced lunch programs. To assist disadvantaged team members, we run two fundraisers which raised \$20,000 to date in order to lower the costs for competition travel and hotels. As of 2021, there are 45,000 active duty military personnel in our community, including the new Space Force, which creates a very STEM oriented region. Our team is working to meet the needs of our local STEM industries. **482**

**Describe the team's methods, with emphasis on the past 3 years, for spreading the *FIRST* message in ways that are effective, scalable, sustainable, and creative. How does your team measure results?**

Cougars Gone Wired spreads the *FIRST* message by engaging in at least 15 community outreach events a year where we focus on one-to-one interactions between our team members and the community. We routinely attend large city events such as carnivals and STEM days that attract 5,000+ visitors. Additionally, we have an active presence across four social media platforms, with 1,000+ followers and 18.9k viewers on our YouTube page over the past three years. **455**

**Please provide specific examples of how your team members act as role models within the *FIRST* community with emphasis on the past 3 years.**

CGW is a featured team in Open Alliance, a group of FRC teams who are an “open book”, showcasing the challenges and breakthroughs of build season. As a featured team, we are a prime example of the principle of Coopertition. We mentor two VEX teams, delivering presentations on the engineering process and mentoring students during their build meetings. Moreover, we assisted a local military base's STEM summer camp program by constructing gliders to teach students about aerospace engineering. **495**

**Describe your team's initiatives to Assist, Mentor, and/or Start other *FIRST* teams with emphasis on activities within the past 3 years.**

CGW annually builds and shares a replica of the playing field with the Colorado FRC community. We host a pre-competition scrimmage for all Colorado FRC teams, provide our field

as the Colorado Regional's practice field, twice for Something Bruin's (4550) mock competition, and the Kendrick Castillo Memorial Tournament in 2021 and 2022. Since 2016, we have hosted the Business Exchange at the Colorado Regional where we share our business operations, and encourage other teams to do the same. **492**

**Beyond starting teams, what initiatives have you done to help inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators? What results have you seen from your efforts in the past 3 years?**

In 2016, we established the annual Making a Difference (MAD) Summer Camp for middle schoolers, a program where 24 students have subsequently joined CGW and enrolled in engineering classes at our school. In addition, we volunteer at the Manitou Springs FLL Explore Festival, offering guidance to students on their presentations. Furthermore, we have created and presented resources on the design process and strategic design to VEX teams in our city. **449**

**Describe the partnerships you've created with other organizations (teams, sponsors, educational institutions, philanthropic entities, etc.) and what you have accomplished together with emphasis on the past 3 years.**

CGW collaborates with Elks Lodge 309, using their facilities for our annual fundraiser dinner that raised \$7,000 in 2023. We assist the Elks Lodge with spring cleaning and volunteer at their charity events. Presenting annually to our school board, we advocate for ongoing support for STEM programs. We partnered with Vertical Raise, and raised \$14,000 for our team. We work with Two Men and a Truck to transport our field to the Colorado Regional, offering valuable practice space for other teams. **497**

**Describe your team's efforts in the past 3 years to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion within your team, *FIRST*, and your communities.**

Our team members are diverse in backgrounds, interests, and skills, attending schools all around the Pikes Peak region. We welcome everyone who is interested and help them find a place where they may flourish. We provide accommodations for students who have mental and physical disabilities, as well as make an effort to keep travel costs affordable through fundraisers and scholarships. Outside of our team, we support a local Girls Who Code Club to inspire young girls to be active in STEM. **499**

**Explain how you ensure your team and the initiatives you have created will continue to run effectively for the foreseeable future.**

Team 2996 places a high priority on preserving positive relationships with our community through the establishment of continuous lines of communication, the planning of frequent follow-up meetings, and active involvement in all activities, large and small. To ensure ongoing collaboration and support, this entails putting on workshops, giving out resources, and ensuring new members are trained on how to run community events when they join the team, which may lead them to a leadership position. **496**

**Describe your team's innovative strategies to recruit, retain, and engage your sponsors within the past 3 years.**

Team 2996 includes the families of our sponsors by inviting them to our events, such as scrimmage and build meetings. We invite our sponsors to a celebratory dinner at the end of the season where we showcase our robot. To improve graduates' future employment prospects, sponsors offer internships which 5 students have taken in the past 2 years. Our students visit events and speak with attending companies in order to explain the impact of *FIRST* with the hopes that they support our team. **489**

**Highlight one area in which your team needs to improve and describe the steps actively being taken to make those improvements.**

Due to our large size, Team 2996 struggles with clear communication. To combat this, we hold two leadership meetings weekly where all members are welcome to discuss the current roadblocks and solutions being developed. During build season, technical presentations are held to guarantee that everyone on our team has access to information about our progress. We also stress the importance of documentation to ensure technical and outreach knowledge is not lost between generations of the team. **492**

**Describe your team's goals to fulfill the mission of *FIRST* and the progress you have made towards those goals.**

Our team's mission is to inspire and prepare the next generation to pursue careers in STEM. Each initiative created and event attended is focused on expanding access to STEM education. To assist *FIRST* programs, we provide resources, build practice areas, and present to elected officials as well as our school board on the importance of STEM education. By volunteering at events where STEM isn't normally present, we show the community that STEM can make a positive impact in any context. **488**

**Briefly describe other matters of interest to the *FIRST* Judges, including items that may not fit into the above topics. The judges are interested in learning about aspects of your team that may be unique or particularly noteworthy.**

The highlight of CGW's outreach program is the Colorado Cents for STEM Initiative, a project which aims to advocate for statewide legislation that would provide grant funding to FRC, FTC, FLL, and VEX teams in need. We have had contact with 3 elected officials, and met with one in person. Additionally, we have proposed graduation credit as a means of promoting robotics participation and to elevate STEM awareness to our school board, as well as increase student voice in education policy. **491**

**(OPTIONAL) Please use this space to ask 1 question to your *FIRST* Impact Award Judges which will be answered after each event with feedback from the judges (250 characters maximum). Note: Questions asking what is required to win the award will not be answered.**

How do we increase communications and strengthen relationships between teams in the *FIRST* community?

What is the most unique quality you've seen from other FRC teams in the past?