

Academic boot camp participants design, build and launch ancient weaponry

<http://newsroom.unr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/2014-EFIT-Trebuchet-Launch.mp4>

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NevadaFIT students launch trebuchets they designed and built during academic preparation program

RENO, Nev. – It may look like medieval warfare near the south entrance to campus Wednesday evening, but it actually will be incoming freshmen students testing trebuchets they are designing and building this week.

These students are participating in the engineering portion of Nevada FIT, a freshman intensive boot campus introducing more than 400 incoming freshman students to the rigors of college life this week.

The engineering students are learning about the engineering design process, the physics of projectiles, problem solving and teamwork. This project requires groups to work together to optimize their trebuchets for maximum throwing distance using their knowledge of physics and working with Excel spreadsheets, and will turn in a technical memo at the end of the week.

Frances Vinlove, an engineering major and NevadaFIT peer mentor, said the project teaches students how to work as a team efficiently, how to make design choices, how to embrace logistical limitations, how to communicate effectively and how to deliver the product on time.

“In the Engineering 100 class, the students will be using these same skills to accomplish a more-complex and longer-term design project,” she said. “The students also learned how to operate several pieces of machinery in the Palmer Engineering Machine Shop, a resource that not many students are aware of.”

WHAT: Trebuchet exhibit and launch

WHO: Media are invited to meet with NevadaFIT program coordinators, faculty and students

WHEN: 5:30-6 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 19

WHERE: The Manzanita Bowl on the south end of campus on the corner of Virginia and Ninth Streets

MEDIA PARKING: Clearly marked news vehicles or those with media passes may park in the lot southeast of the Manzanita Bowl, on the corner of Ninth and Center Streets.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: NevadaFIT began in 2013 as BioFIT, a program geared toward incoming biology majors with 48 students participating. In 2014, the program was expanded to include 350 students.

This year, more than 400 students in all eight colleges with 40 majors represented, including business, community health sciences, education, nursing, engineering, journalism and liberal arts as well as the physical and life sciences, are participating in the program, which is anchored in mathematics.

Typically presented to students in science majors, NevadaFIT, is the first known boot camp style, intensive introduction to the rigors of academic life to move beyond the sciences.

Kevin Carman, executive vice president and provost for the University, said research shows students who are

successful with math in college have higher retention rates, take more credits per semester, have higher grade-point averages and stay on track in their majors to graduate in four years. NevadaFIT students attend daily math classes that relate to their field of study to learn what to expect and what it takes to be successful in the classroom, as well as participate in the rigorous curriculum in real classroom settings planned by their respective colleges.

Funds have been raised to offer scholarships to students who might not otherwise be able to afford attending NevadaFIT. More than half of registered NevadaFIT students' fees are being covered by donations.

Course fees are used to pay student mentors, many of whom are returning past NevadaFIT participants.

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Editors' Note: Check out the video from last year's trebuchet launch [here](#). Video by Frances Vinlove, University of Nevada, Reno.

Nevada's land-grant university founded in 1874, the University of Nevada, Reno ranks in the top tier of best national universities by U.S. News and World Report and is steadily growing in enrollment, excellence and reputation. The University serves nearly 21,000 students. Part of the Nevada System of Higher Education, the University is home to the University of Nevada School of Medicine, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and Wolf Pack Athletics. Through a commitment to world-improving research, student success and outreach benefitting the communities and businesses of Nevada, the University has impact across the state and around the world. For more information, visit www.unr.edu.

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