



Friendship Is Key to Initial PFW Lunabotics Squad

Saideep Kotasthane always has big dreams, sometimes too big for him to accomplish. That's when he asks others to join in, and, thankfully, he has many quality friends.

The Purdue University Fort Wayne senior is the leader for the school's NASA Lunabotics Challenge for 2026, meaning they will design and build an autonomous rover capable of operating in a simulated lunar environment. According to the NASA description, the rover must function with minimal human intervention, relying on embedded systems, real-time sensor data, and autonomous control algorithms.

That's a big dream, especially considering this is PFW's first attempt to participate in the prestigious program, while all the other schools have participated since 2010. Still, the PFW rookies surprised themselves by being selected as a [Top 50 team](#) by NASA after submitting their

first proposals.

"I got to know about the project around the first week of September because I was on NASA's newsletter mailing list," said Kotasthane, an electrical and computer engineering major. "Then I asked my friends if they'd like to be part of this. We just wanted to do something interdisciplinary, and this seemed like the best challenge."

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Numbers Adding up with New Civics Literacy Options

As Ian Ripple jokes, his latest project has nothing to do with his accounting major, but the numbers may still affect many Purdue University Fort Wayne students.

A senior, a husband, and the father of two, Ripple has been inspired to help make the Civics Literacy Requirement more interesting by proposing new curriculum options. Each PFW student must meet the requirements before graduation, including passing a 50-question civics knowledge test. Options include attending specific campus events, taking one of seven courses, and listening to four hour-long recordings on Brightspace.

Ripple would like to spice up the Brightspace recordings, which, unlike him, lack any sense of humor.

"The content I always use as an example is not very interesting," Ripple said. "I don't know about you, but hearing a one-hour lecture of someone talking about the filibuster is not necessarily the most interesting topic."

Not buying that one? Ripple said another option is a lecture about redistricting. While important, neither topic is going to inspire students to consider future involvement in the governmental process.

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Eventful

There's always plenty to do at Purdue Fort Wayne. To find your favorites—or discover new activities—check the full [events calendar](#) often to see what's happening on campus.

APRIL

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Mon., 5:30–8:30 p.m.

American Heart Association CPR/AED Certification Class

The American Heart Association Basic Life Support CPR & AED Training Class is designed to teach the skills of CPR for victims of all ages. The Heartsaver First Aid Course trains participants in first aid basics for the most common first aid emergencies...

APRIL

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Tues., 7:39–9 p.m.

String Studio Recital

This program consists of composers from different eras of music and features student performers from PFW's violin, viola, cello, and string bass studios. Free admission...

In a Snap

Seen and noted around campus. Monitor our university social feeds for more great moments of Mastodon life.



A collaboration between the Department of Theatre and Helmke Library presented a staged reading and discussion of "R.U.R. Rossum's Universal Robots" in Kettler Hall Studio Theatre. Published in 1920, the themes of technology and what it means to be human still resonate today.

News Center



Inside PFW Archive



Athletics



Ripples



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