

ADESC Student Design Competition 2026–2027

Sponsorship Prospectus

Recruiting | Student Engagement | Brand Visibility | Competition Partnership

Partner With the Next Generation of Directed Energy, Aerospace, and Autonomous Systems Engineers

Support a demanding student design competition while building relationships with emerging engineers demonstrating initiative, technical depth, teamwork, and systems-integration experience.



Visit www.adesccompetition.org for more information!

The Mission: Closing the Directed Energy Workforce Gap

Directed Energy Weapons (DEW) – high-energy lasers and high-power microwaves – promise a near-limitless magazine and a fraction of the cost-per-shot of traditional kinetic interceptors. As inexpensive, expendable drones proliferate globally, using million-dollar interceptors to stop thousand-dollar threats has become unsustainable.

The hardest part of fielding DEW isn't the underlying physics – it's systems integration: fitting a payload's size, weight, power, and cooling (SWaP-C) needs onto a mobile platform. Compounding this is a critical workforce shortfall. Because directed energy has lacked a large commercial market, the defense sector lacks a deep bench of engineers experienced in high-power payloads and flight platforms.

The Airborne Directed Energy Systems Committee (ADESC) Student Design Competition – backed by the [American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics \(AIAA\)](#) and the [Directed Energy Professional Society \(DEPS\)](#) – closes that gap. We give undergraduate and graduate engineers hands-on, hardware-ready experience designing, building, and flight-testing real directed energy systems.

Meet Your Future Workforce

ADESC participants build direct, applicable experience across critical engineering disciplines. Let the ADESC Student Design Competition vet your workforce for you:

- Autonomous & Semi-Autonomous Flight: GNC, autonomy, robotics, controls.
- Detection & Target Tracking: Computer vision, sensing, signal processing.
- Optical / Laser Engagement System: Optics, photonics, lasers, electro-optics.
- UAS Design & Integration: Aerospace, mechanical, electrical engineering.
- Communications & Telemetry: RF, embedded systems, networking.
- Real-Time System Control: Controls, software, embedded computing.
- Safety & Verification: Systems engineering, test, certification.

Sponsorship Tiers & Investment Levels

Benefit	Supporting Partner \$1,000 - \$24,999	Recruiting Partner \$25,000 - \$49,999	Mission Partner \$50,000 - \$100,000	Presenting Partner >\$100,000
Event Naming Rights				✓
Premier Banquet Placement			✓	✓
Named Technical Award		✓	✓	✓
Recruitment Directory Access		✓	✓	✓
Pit Booth	✓	✓	✓	✓
Branding in the pit	✓	✓	✓	✓
Digital visibility	✓	✓	✓	✓
Printed / event material	✓	✓	✓	✓

Explanation of Benefits

Event Naming Rights

Exclusive top-level branding that integrates the sponsor's name directly into the official title of the entire competition (e.g., "The 2027 ADESC Student Design Competition presented by [Company]") across all official communications, media releases, and event headers.

If multiple companies earn this tier, the company that sponsors the highest will go first in the name.

Premier Banquet Placement

Prime seating arrangements at the awards banquet, including the privilege of selecting which specific student team or university delegation the sponsor's representatives sit with to foster direct, personal networking.

If multiple companies earn this tier and select the same table, the company that sponsors the highest will get their first choice.

Named Technical Award

The opportunity to sponsor, name (e.g., "[Company] Autonomy & GNC Award"), and define the criteria for a specific competitive sub-award. Sponsors retain the right to set a structured cash prize component and present the award live to the winning student team.

If multiple companies earn this tier and want to provide the same award, the company that sponsors the most will get their first choice.

Recruitment Directory Access

Exclusive access to an opt-in database of participating student participants. Depending on student consent, profiles include résumés, degree programs, expected graduation dates, technical interests, competition roles, and direct contact information.

Pit Booth

A dedicated physical recruiter station set up directly inside the team pit and hangar area, allowing company representatives to engage face-to-face with students as they prepare, troubleshoot, and test their hardware systems on competition grounds.

Branding in the pit

Prominent physical signage and logo display located within the team pit and hangar workspace areas, ensuring high visual exposure to all participating teams, judges, and spectators throughout the event.

Digital visibility

Company logo and partner recognition featured across official online channels, including the ADESC website, social media platforms, livestream feeds, recorded media, and digital schedule graphics.

Printed / event material

Logo and corporate acknowledgement featured on physical collateral distributed during the event, such as official printed programs, venue maps, schedule cards, badges, credentials, and event sponsor boards.

Custom, In-Kind, and Targeted Sponsorship Opportunities

For partners who prefer tailored support, we welcome custom packages and in-kind contributions:

- **À-La-Carte Options:** Sponsor the student/sponsor networking reception, awards ceremony, student meals, travel assistance grants, or media production.
- **In-Kind Contributions:** Supply software licenses, cloud resources, fabrication services, test equipment, optics, sensors, computing hardware, or UAS components.

How Your Support is Invested:

Sponsorship contributions directly enable the execution, safety, and growth of the ADESC Student Design Competition, deployed at the discretion of competition organizers toward areas critical to moving the event forward:

- **Venue & Range Operations:** Operating professional testing facilities, such as the Pendleton UAS Range, to ensure a safe, fully supported flight-test environment.
- **Safety & Infrastructure:** Deploying robust safety equipment, protocols, and range infrastructure required for laser and UAS operations.
- **Competition Hardware & Target Systems:** Funding specialized red-team assets, target systems, and technical testing gear used to evaluate student performance.
- **Technical Infrastructure:** Supporting communications, tracking, scoring systems, and telemetry architecture.
- **Awards & Recognition:** Funding competitive prizes, trophies, and formal recognition for top-performing student teams.
- **Accessibility & Travel Support:** Providing travel grants and participation assistance to broaden university access and enable broader team engagement.
- **Event Logistics & Hospitality:** Managing comprehensive event logistics, staffing, volunteer support, and hospitality for participants and partners.
- **Outreach & Media Production:** Driving high-visibility media production, public outreach, and long-term expansion for future competition cycles.

How To Sponsor:

1. Complete the **ADESC Competition Sponsorship Indoc Form**
Location: <https://www.adesccompetition.org/sponsors>
What it includes:
 - Company Name and address
 - Type and amount of sponsorship
 - Point of Contact with name, email, and phone number
2. We review the information and then an AIAA representative will send the listed point of contact an invoice; you can sponsor by check or credit card
3. Once payment is received, AIAA will send you a thank you letter to the listed point of contact that your company can submit with their year-end tax filings

Contact Us

Become a Sponsor | Discuss a Custom Partnership | Request Information

Partner with ADESC to build your talent pipeline, engage directly with emerging engineers, and help develop the next generation of professionals working across aerospace, autonomy, optics, sensing, controls, and advanced systems integration.

The ADESC Competition Team
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