

PICTURETHIS



## Education on wheels


By MICHELLE HITE '88

**P**romoting STEM education and sustainable transportation in one project — should be as easy as riding a bike, right? Five enterprising students have made it nearly that simple. As part of Earth Week activities on the National Mall, Margaret Beckom (statistics), Tripp Loflin (ISAT), Paul Crisman (ISAT), Sam Sweet (ISAT) and Ari Giller-Leinwohl (ISAT) presented a project with a two-fold mission: to promote STEM education in the high-school population and to promote sustainable transportation in the community. The team represented JMU at the fifth National Sustainable Design Expo April 18–20 in Washington, D.C. They showed off results of their project,

“Promoting Sustainability on Campuses: A College Student-Run, Electric-Assisted Bicycle Competition for High Schools.”

The group created a competition for high-school students to design and build electric-assisted bicycles to meet the needs of commuters on college campuses. The competition promotes science, technology, engineering and mathematics education. Although the

JMU team didn’t win an award to fund the competition for 2009-10, the experience has inspired team members to continue to work with electric vehicles for their senior research projects.

Two JMU professors advised the team — Samantha Bates Prins (mathematics and statistics) and Rob Prins (engineering). While in D.C., the student team offered demo rides on three electric-assisted bicycles, which they built in the JMU Alternative Fuel Vehicle lab. 



The JMU team presents their project to judges from the American Association for the Advancement of Science in front of the U.S. Capitol.

**Above, left to right: Margaret Beckom (statistics), Tripp Loflin (ISAT), Paul Crisman (ISAT), Sam Sweet (ISAT) and Ari Giller-Leinwohl (ISAT).**