"Summer Vacation Returns: College Students Take on AI and Robotics Development Challenges" GIST holds 9th AI Creative Convergence Competition

- Held annually to foster talent in AI convergence technology... 24 undergraduate students from nine universities spent two months of summer vacation on the GIST campus developing a table tennis robot (Track 1) and conducting an autonomous AI project (Track 2)

- Support is provided for lectures, experiments, practical training, material costs, practice spaces, and dormitories to foster creativity and convergence capabilities, and the program discovers proven convergence talent... The joint Yonsei University-Kyung Hee University team and the GIST team received awards for each track

▲ Participants and officials pose for a commemorative photo at the GIST '2025 AI Creative Convergence Competition' awards ceremony.

Korean college students gave up their summer vacations to gather together and challenge themselves to develop a table tennis robot and an autonomous artificial intelligence (AI) project.

The Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology (GIST, President Kichul Lim) announced the successful conclusion of the "2025 9th GIST AI Creative Convergence Competition," which ran for approximately two months and was hosted by the Department of AI Convergence (Department Head Kim Jong-won) on Thursday, August 21st.

The competition, which began in 2017 and is now in its 9th year, aims to discover creative and convergent talent required for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, including fields such as artificial intelligence, intelligent robots, virtual environments, and healthcare.

This year, the competition was organized by the newly established "Department of AI Convergence," which merged the existing "Graduate School of AI" and the "Institute of Convergence Technology" following GIST's reorganization of its undergraduate program in February. The name of the competition was also changed from "Creative Convergence Competition" to "AI Creative Convergence Competition," further enhancing its format.

This year's competition ran for two months, from June 23 to August 21, and was divided into two categories: ▲ Track 1: Table Tennis Robot Contest and ▲ Track 2: AI Creative Convergence Autonomous Project Contest. Twenty-four undergraduate students from nine universities in Korea participated, forming nine teams.

The participating students resided at GIST during the summer vacation, receiving guidance from faculty from the Department of AI Convergence and graduate student mentors to implement their ideas. GIST fully supported the students' dedication to the competition, providing lectures, labs, materials, practice space, and dormitories.

The finals of the competition were held on Monday, August 18th, and the awards ceremony was held on Thursday, August 21st at 2:00 PM in Room 109 of the Dasan Building. A total of six teams won awards, with the grand prize winners receiving a certificate and cash prize (Table Tennis Robot: 1.8 million won, AI Creative Convergence: 900,000 won).

Track 1: Table Tennis Robot Contest: Robots competed by catching balls fired from a table tennis machine or competing against participating students.

The grand prize went to the Yonsei University-Kyung Hee University joint team, "Yoo Jeong-hyun Table Tennis Robot" (Jeong-hyun Yoon, Min-geon Kim, and Ga-hyun Kim from Yonsei University, and Bo-gyeom Hwang from Kyung Hee University). The excellence award went to the GIST student team, "ISAAC Toast" (Jun-min Ha, Seo-hwi Park, and Jin-hyeong Lee).

▲ Team "ISAAC Toast," winner of the excellence award in the table tennis robot contest of the "2025 AI Creative Convergence Competition" hosted by the GIST Department of AI Convergence, is practicing with a table tennis robot.

Track 2: AI Creative Convergence Autonomous Project Contest: Participants chose a topic of their choice and worked on the project in their respective mentor professor's lab for a month before presenting their results. The grand prize went to "Team P.E." (GIST's Jae-hyung Park and Tae-jun Eom), and the first prize went to "Equipped with a Triple SSS-level CYOA*, LLM* System" (GIST's Yoon-sang Lee and Sungkyunkwan University's Min-jae Kim). The excellence award went to the "Digital Trio" team (Sungkyunkwan University's

Se-bin Park and Sung-pil Hong), and the encouragement award went to the "SLAM DUNK" team (Sungkyunkwan University's Jeong-woo Choi and Min-seong Kwon).

▲ The "SLAM DUNK" team, winner of the Encouragement Award in the AI Creative Convergence Autonomous Project Contest hosted by the GIST Department of AI Convergence, is presenting their achievements.

* CYOA: An acronym for "Choose Your Own Adventure," meaning "an adventure you choose yourself." It is primarily used in gaming and interactive storytelling.

* LLM: Large Language Model

(Track 2) Jaehyung Park, a student on "Team P.E.", the winning team in the AI Creative Convergence Autonomous Project Contest, stated, "We challenged ourselves with 3D image reconstruction technology to overcome the limitations of existing technologies in environments such as rain, fog, and darkness. By personally handling the entire process, from data collection to model design, verification, and performance improvement, I was able to develop the capabilities necessary for a researcher."

Jongwon Kim, Dean of the Department of AI Convergence, said, "This year's competition showcased various attempts to integrate hardware (robots), AI models, and digital twins, focusing on the data (D)-networking (N)-artificial intelligence (A) framework." He added, "This competition will continue to serve as an experimental stage for discovering proven convergence talents equipped with the creative problem-solving skills required in the AI-driven digital transformation era."

▲ Dean Jongwon Kim delivers a congratulatory address at the awards ceremony for the "2025 AI Creative Convergence Competition," hosted by the GIST Department of AI Convergence.

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