

Nole Navigators Community Outreach Submission: RoboBoat 2026

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Nole Navigators, FSU Panama City's RoboBoat team, works as a regional collaborative, bringing together high school students from across Bay County. In 2025, our team included students from more than five different high schools ranging from small charter schools to homeschooled students to traditional public schools. This structure opens the door for students who might not otherwise have access to robotics and hands-on engineering programs.

We host weekly meetings on the FSU Panama City campus where undergraduate mentors help high school students learn CAD modeling, electronics, programming, 3D printing, and project management. These sessions are hands-on and cover a wide range of STEM skills, giving students the chance to apply what they learn directly to our RoboBoat. Along with technical skills, the program also focuses on communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Students work in groups with a diverse range of academic experience, which encourages peer mentoring and helps younger students feel welcomed in STEM environments. Expanding participation in STEM across our region is a major goal of our outreach efforts, which is why we intentionally include schools that have limited access to competitive robotics programs. Being a small, mostly suburban area in Northwest Florida, Panama City has few opportunities for high school students to engage with robotics. Having a mixed team of undergraduate and high school students helps break down barriers for students from diverse academic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Our team includes multiple students from Title I schools, where at least 40% of the student population comes from low-income households. By providing access to hands-on robotics, mentorship, and a supportive STEM community we help create a pathway from high school to higher education, and ultimately, careers in STEM for students in our community.