

Robot Installed at Engineering & Computer Science

Vickers Engineering donates functioning robot for labs

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Several staff and faculty examine the newly delivered robot after it was unwrapped in a lab in April. (Photo by Brian Tagalog)

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Andrews University's [Department of Engineering & Computer Science](#) received a Fanuc S-420i robot from Vickers Engineering Inc. this past month. The industrial Fanuc (Factory Automation Numerical Control) robot is designed to aid manufacturers by performing tasks difficult or impossible for humans to do. In fact, the New Troy, Michigan-based manufacturing company specializes in using automatons to increase production.

Jordan Klint, Vickers engineering manager, explains, "This robot is classified as a material handling robot, which is designed for moving, loading or stacking large objects."

According to Klint, the robot originally loaded lathes, which were used to turn sprocket wheels on their skidsteers. The robot, however, had been out of use for five years. Klint said that as time went on, Vickers began specializing in smaller components, weighing four pounds or less. This meant that eventually the larger robot became impractical for their needs.

Boon-Chai Ng, who teaches the Fanuc robotics certification program, intends to use the robot in robotics programming classes offered by the engineering program. Prior to the donation, the department only had one unit of Fanuc robot arms. Ng had visited Vickers with his classes in 2014 and again this past winter, at the request of a Vickers employee who was in Ng's class.

"We had talked about donating this robot to one of the local community colleges for a while, but they had not shown much interest," Klint mentioned. "In conjunction with the second visit from Andrews, I said in passing that we were looking to donate this item and a student jumped on it."

Working with Ng, they arranged to have the robot donated to Andrews University. The department now looks forward to making use of its new acquisition.

"We hope that it is a useful tool for the University and gives the students an additional frame of reference of automation-related topics," Klint said. He added that he appreciates when local universities support math and science programs. "Vickers tries to help in whatever small things we can do to help that are easy and worthwhile steps to support these areas in education."

For more information about the engineering program at Andrews, visit andrews.edu/ecs, email engineering@andrews.edu or call 269-471-3420.

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