

Jason Bretzlaff, a prominent mentor of the Heroes of Tomorrow, has been involved with Team 67 for 3 years. In this short time, Jason has provided our team with many valuable assets. His inspirational energy encourages students to put forth their best efforts while still enjoying every second they are working.

Jason has done an inspirational job equipping students on the team with the fundamental skills necessary for a successful robot build season as well as a successful competition season. For example, during the FRC kickoff he put together a presentation outlining the goals and vision for our team. By reviewing our processes from last year, he demonstrated how we should approach the difficult task of developing a solution to this season's design challenge. He is also instrumental during the competition season where he oversees the process for choosing alliance partners. This includes helping students sort match reports and information gathered in the pits to prioritize our 'pick list'. Through this process, he helps students understand why we are considering certain teams and how to evaluate the diverse designs and strategies developed by others.

Jason works closely with the other two engineering mentors, Jim Meyer and Adam Freeman, to design a world class robot. He designs mostly through virtual prototyping, and is never satisfied with 'good enough', constantly iterating for continuous improvement. It is during these redesigns where students provide input, drastically shaping the look of the robot. He helps students in our engineering subgroup to model Jim and Adam's 2-D robot parts in 3-D virtual space. This forces them to become much better at thinking abstractly and developing ideas with design programs like AutoCAD and Solid Works. To keep them on track, he sets goals for the students that are fair yet challenging. His determination and encouragement allow the students to excel while still having fun and learning a lot about the field of engineering.

As a newer member of our team, Jason brings a plethora of 'outside the box' ideas, especially related to the little things. Last year he led our mini-bot team. This year he developed our shooter, spending the first 3 weeks of the season performing tests and shot analysis on a student-built prototype. Jason has also been working on finding new materials for our robot bumpers which he has vowed to make "the greatest ever." It's this kind of enthusiasm that helps keep our designs fresh and current. By establishing a private blog for the design group, he has also fostered community among the team. Says mentor Gina Sweet, "It's helped me to feel like a part of what's going on even when I can't be there."

On a more personal level, Jason works very closely with many of the students on our team. One specifically is sophomore Andrew Knox. Knox states, "He brings the whole group in, makes sure everyone has a fair amount of work and allows people to build with him." Another student who works closely with Jason is junior Jason Droulliard, he says, "Jason has many good characteristics that let him be a good leader. He really wants us to reach our full potential."

Overall, Jason has brought many valuable contributions to FIRST Team 67. In just 3 short years Jason has inspired many students to go after their dreams and given them the confidence that they need to do so. If this team is truly the Heroes of Tomorrow, then Jason Bretzlaff is leading us there.