

AN INTERVIEW WITH **ADIDAS**

PAUL SMITH, DIRECTOR
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Global reputation

"I was first attracted to TU Delft by the university's global reputation in various engineering fields; I was particularly interested in TU Delft's robotics and material research groups. At that time, I found out that a Sports Engineering Institute was going to be set up, and since then, TU Delft has become an even more attractive partner for our team. It has been very positive to see the institute come to life and grow in recent years, helping to bring the worlds of sport and engineering even closer together. TU Delft has also shown its commitment to the

sports engineering world by organising and hosting the International Sports Engineering Association Meeting in 2016. If TU Delft continues down this path, I believe that only good things can come out of the partnerships, particularly on the industry side."

Cross functional approach to sports engineering

"One aspect that makes the TU Delft Sports Engineering Institute relevant is its focus on cross-functional teams. By bringing together faculties and students from different research areas, students are thoroughly prepared for working in teams in industry. This creates a good environment for innovation, bringing insights from different areas and mind-sets. For us, this style of working parallels the way we work at adidas, where it is very common for designers, sports scientists and engineers to work closely together to create a new product. The main benefits for adidas of working with the TU Delft Sports Engineering Institute is that the institute draws on expertise from lots of different areas and therefore has a much broader perspective, which enables it to come up with innovative new solutions. With its

minor in Sports Innovation and state-of-the-art Applied Labs, TU Delft prepares students thoroughly for a workforce that is accustomed to project work with people who bring different perspectives and different points of view.”

Hands-on teaching methods and state-of-the-art facilities

“Having visited the university many times in recent years, one of the nice benefits of working with TU Delft is the focus on hands-on learning for students, as showcased by the various D:DREAM labs and other lab facilities. It is great to see TU Delft offering students both a fundamental education and the ability to apply what they have learned. TU Delft’s willingness to keep investing in state-of-the-art laboratory facilities makes working with the Sports Engineering Institute attractive to a group such as ours. Every time I come to Delft, which is once or twice a year, there is some new and more advanced equipment that can be applied directly to the university’s teaching and research fields. The fact that the institute and all the groups at TU Delft associated with sport are continuously investing in new research facilities results in

state-of-the-art science that has great appeal for adidas.”

Research areas

“To date, adidas and TU Delft have jointly conducted fundamental research on materials science, aerodynamics and various sports engineering topics. We believe there is potential for much more.”

Working with TU Delft students

“adidas works with TU Delft students for various reasons: to get new impulses from talented students, to gain an understanding of what type of student comes out of a Sports Engineering Institute programme, to see how the university interacts with students, and to spot potential talent to join our team. This helps us to reflect on new learning methods and offers the potential to recruit bright young talent from the engineering world. Last year – and this present year, for the second time – adidas worked with the Sports Engineering Institute by taking part in the minor in Sports Innovation. We provided sponsorship and a topic, and gave guidance and feedback during the semester-long course. 1

The adidas FUTURE team frequently partners with universities to offer various placements in our R&D team. We have begun to host MSc students from TU Delft for a co-located study, spending time both at our German headquarters and at TU Delft. This not only allows joint research in cutting-edge areas of engineering and science, but it also allows us to assess whether graduates are able to join adidas' Research and Development team in various roles. For example, a TU Delft student was directly embedded in our team in Germany for six months so he could understand how adidas works and what our challenges are. Now he has returned to Delft and is doing his final research at the lab facilities there, so he can complete his thesis."

Future opportunities for collaboration

"adidas' Research and Development team is called the FUTURE Team. A lot of the FUTURE Team's work is fundamental research in areas that are not only sports-based, but that also take inspiration from automotive, aerospace and materials science, not to mention simulation and sports science. As the Sports Engineering Institute continues to grow and develop, the future looks bright for further partnerships with the university."