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The integrated thesis project was the single most challenging, and educational experience of my college career. The strict project guidelines of the AEI competition pushed me to refine my technical skills as an engineer, while the dynamics of working with an eight-person team helped me develop my competence in interpersonal communication, and time-management strategies. Though the integrated design project seemed much more challenging than an individual thesis project, I felt that the experience of working with seven other engineers across four different disciplines was much more applicable to the real-world challenges ahead of me.

In particular, the most challenging aspect of the project was in making design decisions. Each member of the team had to give their own discipline's insight, but still understand the concerns of the other team members, and be willing to be flexible for the good of the project as a whole. I think the Penn State Architectural Engineering program, and the building industry as a whole, would benefit if all AE students had this kind of experience during their college careers.

