As the Baja SAE Kansas competition looms on the horizon, the WPI Baja team is hard at work. This year the chapter is focusing on designing a new transmission. Although the list of design modifications to last year’s transmission was large at the beginning of the season, as the team progressed further into the design cycle the list was shortened. Through the process of analyzing the practicality and desirability of the items on the list, the team was able to prioritize the design elements. The cable-locking differential that the team was planning on implementing quickly moved down the list due to lack of field-serviceability. A lot of very marketable features were removed from the table this year in favor of a safer, simpler, and more reliable design. By focusing on the finer points of the design, such as optimizing rear brake power, serviceability, and durability, the team is hoping to develop a robust chassis on which next year’s more ambitious design will be based. Many of these objectives might have been overlooked had the team chosen the more ambitious design project.

In addition, by saving critical design time, the team will be able to focus on many of the administrative barriers that it has encountered in the past. Valuable marketing material is being developed on a daily basis with hopes of gathering additional support from the private sector. With valuable assistance from Dassault Systèmes - Solidworks, the WPI Student Government Association and Mechanical Engineering Department, there is no reason that the team will not be able to make a strong showing in Kansas this year.