



Mechanical Engineering Seminar Series

Fire ant rafts, cubic poop, and the Ig Nobel Prize

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Room 3150 DOW

4:00 p.m.

This seminar will also be streamed live at the following link

[ME Seminar Zoom link](#) (QR Code below)

Password 413824



Abstract:

Fluid mechanics can show up in surprising places. In the depths of the wetlands of Brazil, fire ants link their bodies together to form waterproof rafts. These rafts are both liquid and solid, able to safely bounce off rocks or flow through branches. When I was changing my son's diaper, little did I know what happened next would lead me to the Ig Nobel Prize at Harvard University, first in 2015, and then later studying the cubic poo of wombats in 2019. In this talk, I'll discuss how to turn chance observations into opportunities for worldwide engagement with science.

Bio:

Dr. David Hu is a mechanical engineer who studies the interactions of animals with water. He has discovered how dogs shake dry, how insects walk on water, and how eyelashes protect the eyes from drying. Originally from Rockville, Maryland, he earned degrees in mathematics and mechanical engineering from M.I.T., and is now Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Biology and Adjunct Professor of Physics at Georgia Tech. He is a recipient of the National Science Foundation CAREER award for young scientists, the Ig Nobel Prize in Physics, and the Pineapple Science Prize (the Ig Nobel of China). His work has been featured in The Economist, The New York Times, Saturday Night Live, and Highlights for Children. He is the author of the book "How to walk on water and climb up walls," published by Princeton University Press. He lives with his wife and two children in Atlanta, Georgia.

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