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## MEDIA RELEASE

# A first for SFU mechatronics: pair of siblings graduating together

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**Photos:** <http://i.sfu.ca/DVxTch>

Convocation on June 9 will be a double celebration for the Mahinpoor family. Brothers Ali and Soheil are the first siblings to graduate together from Simon Fraser University's **Mechatronic Systems Engineering** (MSE) undergraduate program.

Born in Iran three years apart, the brothers have been perfecting their craft since childhood.

"I used to open things up to see how they worked: my toys, radios, vacuum cleaners," says Ali. His little brother's role? "I was the helper," says Soheil.

Luckily the boys' parents supported their burgeoning—if sometimes playfully destructive—curiosity. Their father even gave Ali a circuit kit and soldering iron, which he credits with sparking his interest in eventually reassembling the machines he took apart.

Two decades later, the brothers are still a tight-knit team tinkering with machines, albeit at a more advanced level. They worked together on their capstone group project: a vision-based monitoring system that automatically detects trains requiring inspection.

Forging a future in engineering with your brother has its advantages, says Soheil.

"You can always count on each other to get the job done and produce quality work. We've got a great connection, and we balance each other out well."

You could say the brothers' academic path was fate: mechatronics found them. In 2009, Ali was narrowing down his degree options when he saw a television interview with SFU MSE school director **Farid Golnaraghi** that captured his imagination.

"Since I was a kid I had a passion for robotics and space—bringing hardware and software tools alive. In mechatronics, they both came together in one package," he says.

He urged Soheil, who was studying science at the time, to explore the program as well and by September, both brothers were enrolled at SFU. Now, five years later, they will cross the convocation dais together.

As for the future, Ali's focus is on space robotics, while Soheil hopes to work in integrated engineering. However, they wouldn't rule out a future collaboration, says Soheil.

"An opportunity working together in the future, perhaps developing apps or software, would be a dream for us."

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