

Austin Peay State University

2008-09 Middle TN Science and Engineering Fair

From the MTSEF Director...

2008 - What a year for the MTSEF!

It was the largest fair ever for APSU with 186 projects exhibited (and very few no shows).

Grand Prize winners Charlie Xie and Chris King received second and third place awards in their respective divisions at the ISEF, but they also won some outstanding special awards. Charlie received a \$20,000 scholarship to the Albany School of Pharmacy, and Chris got the top award from the U.S. Army – an all expense paid trip to the “Cherry Blossom Festival” in Japan.

But there’s more - Jiahe Gu, Jyotishka Biswas, and Jenna Davis made the top 300 finalists nationwide in grades 6-8. Jiahe made the top 30!

I was so impressed with the number and level of projects from last year. Keep up the good work and let’s do it again. Let me know if I can help.

On a more somber note - The headline from the Nashville Tennessean on Sunday, Nov. 23 was “Science gets short shrift”. It detailed how many of our middle Tennessee high school students were not prepared for college science. I can only say that in my experience in high school and college, involving students in doing science with a research project along with their regular classroom work is the best way to prepare students for a science career and success in college science courses.

And that is why after 14 years of high school teaching and 17 years at the college level – I am the director of the Middle TN Science and Engineering Fair. I believe in “doing” science and not just reading about it. Science has long been a verb and not just a noun with me.

Ron Robertson
Department of Chemistry, APSU

The SRC and IRB

There are many faculty here at APSU who work countless hours on our SRC and IRB committees for the MTSEF. The Scientific Review Committee (SRC) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) review and approve special projects before the fair that deal with human subjects, vertebrate animals, and many areas of hazardous substances. Their job is to make sure that the experimentation is done safely and is well supervised. The SRC also has the task of reviewing every project application before official entry in the fair. It is a tremendous task. The chair of the SRC is Dr. Sarah Schiller, 931-221-6335, schillers@apsu.edu. The chair of the IRB is Dr. Nanci Woods, 931-221-7236, woodsn@apsu.edu.

Did you know –

Not all areas of study are best served by scientific method based research. Projects in engineering, mathematics, and computer science as well as theoretical projects and inventions sometimes don't fit the scientific method mold. See the ISEF 2009 Student Handbook for a description of these projects as well as many other helps on paper and abstract writing and project startup.

Communication

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Discussion Board: MTSEF Board pauling.apsu.edu/discus

Note – the Discussion Board is a great place to share ideas and get answers to your questions. Try it out! I continue to put project ideas on it. Please post!

Science Fair

Resources, Helps, and the 57th Middle TN Science & Engineering Fair

Looking for Ideas for Science Fair Projects in Mathematics?

Check out these sites:

<http://www.mathmodels.org/>

<http://www.comap.com/highschool/contests/himcm/index.html>

(See the "previous contests" and "Projects" links.)

Other project ideas

<http://www.apsu.edu/robertsonr/sciencefair/project%20ideas.htm>

<http://www.sciencebuddies.org/>

Let your students know that –

The grand prize winners at the MTSEF receive one year full tuition scholarships to APSU and free expense paid trips to the weeklong ISEF (this year in Reno, Nevada – May 10-15, 2009)

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57th Middle Tennessee Science and Engineering Fair

Austin Peay State University

March 19-21, 2009

For ALL projects:

Required Forms:

Entry Form (front & back), Forms 1, 1A, 1B

Notes: Several signatures on these forms must be signed before experimentation begins. Please note this and plan accordingly.

Due Date: *Feb. 25, 2009 is the FINAL DEADLINE for the receipt of the MTSEF application form and all required ISEF forms.*

For projects requiring special documentation:

Required Forms: the forms above plus -

See the Web site for specific forms and procedures

Important! Several of these additional forms must be completed before the project begins AND sent to the MTSEF IRB/SRC for prior approval. Please plan accordingly. The IRB will review prior approvals as they are submitted. The SRC will be meeting once a month and has the remaining due dates: Dec. 14 and January 12. *January 12 is the FINAL DEADLINE for the IRB and SRC to give pre-approval to a project.*

General information:

*The schedule for this year's fair and award ceremony can be found on the enclosed entry form.

*Please note that by signing the entry form, the student is committed to attending the award ceremony if he/she receives an award.

*Middle schools are limited to sending three projects per grade unless awards were won in previous years. Go to <http://www.apsu.edu/mtsef> for information regarding your school. Also, please remember to complete the middle school project certification form found at the Web site.