

Contact:
Laura Roberts
(312) 515-4601
laura@lrconnect.com

EMBARGOED UNTIL NOVEMBER 18, 2010



NATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED SCIENCE OLYMPIAD ANNOUNCES
PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
TO PROMOTE STEM LEARNING FOR K-12 STUDENTS

Chicago-Based Science Education Non-Profit is Largest Team Science Competition in the United States; University of Illinois Ranked Top Ten in Science and Engineering

CHICAGO, November 18, 2010 -- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), one of the leading science and engineering institutions in the United States and nationally-recognized Science Olympiad have announced a long-term partnership. Science Olympiad is a 27-year-old national science competition that focuses on student teams working together on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) challenges. Aligned to the National Science Education Standards developed by the National Research Council, Science Olympiad's broad scope of events touch every letter in STEM.

"We are honored to partner with the University of Illinois," said Dr. Gerard Putz, Science Olympiad co-founder and president. "Its commitment to the on-campus I-STEM Education Initiative mirrors Science Olympiad's mission to connect K-12 STEM learning, higher education and workforce development. This partnership secures a rock-solid foundation for Science Olympiad moving forward."

The merger will employ a three-year transition period during which I-STEM and UIUC will work closely with Science Olympiad to increase staffing and programs. After the 2013 National Tournament, Science Olympiad's national operations will be housed on the UIUC campus, and in 2014, the University of Illinois plans to host the 30th Anniversary of the Science Olympiad National Tournament. In 2010, UIUC offered 62 gold medal winners in the high school division of the Science Olympiad National Tournament a four-year, full-ride tuition waiver, valued at more than \$100,000 each.

A key highlight of the merger is the formation of the Science Olympiad Endowment at the University of Illinois Foundation, which will be devoted to serving the philanthropic, service-oriented goals of Science Olympiad. Major priorities include:

- Awarding grants to communities for Urban and Rural Schools Initiatives
- Awarding grants and professional development to state Science Olympiad organizations
- Providing scholarships or fellowships to Science Olympiad Alumni Association members

In conjunction with I-STEM and several UIUC departments, Science Olympiad will implement long-desired plans designed to benefit the entire national organization, including improved professional development for directors and supervisors and better resources for students and teachers. The purpose of this partnership is for UIUC and I-STEM to support the original mission of Science Olympiad in its current form, meaning that the structure of teams, tournaments, rules, volunteers, committees and state organizations will remain the same.

"Science Olympiad is the most widely recognized and prestigious science competition in the United States," said Interim Chancellor Robert Easter of the UIUC campus. "Our campus is excited about the possibilities for getting more and more students engaged in science."

In addition to hosting the Illinois Science Olympiad State Tournament since 1995 and two National Tournaments in 2005 and 2010, UIUC has played a pivotal role in piloting the Urban Schools Initiative in the Chicago Public Schools, which has served nearly 1,000 students and 200 teachers since 2007. The Urban Schools Initiative was successfully used as the model for the Hawaii State Science Olympiad Rural Island Initiative, which scored a \$304,000 grant from Governor Linda Lingle's office last month.

About Science Olympiad:

Founded in 1984, Science Olympiad is a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of K-12 science education, increasing male, female and minority interest in science, creating a technologically literate workforce and providing recognition for outstanding achievement by both students and teachers. Nearly 200,000 students on 6,000 middle school and high school teams in 48 states compete in 320 Science Olympiad Invitational, Regional, State and National Tournaments annually. Science Olympiad sent six students and two coaches to the White House Science Fair in Washington, DC, on October 18, 2010, where President Obama recognized the outstanding achievement of top science competition winners from across the US.

About the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign:

Since its founding in 1867, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has been committed to excellence in research, teaching, and public engagement. In its 2011 rankings, US News & World Report's America's Best Colleges rated Illinois as the number 15 public university, with the College of Engineering, the Ph.D. Chemistry program and the Ph.D. Computer Science program all ranking in the Top Ten nationally.

About the I-STEM Education Initiative:

As the flagship campus of one of the nation's premier land-grant research universities, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is committed to playing an active role in the improvement of STEM education at all levels. The I-STEM Education Initiative (I-STEM), a campus coalition grounded in Education and led by the Office of the Chancellor, involves all units and departments. The vision is to foster accessible, effective STEM teaching and learning at local, state, and national levels, thereby preparing a highly able citizenry and STEM workforce to tackle pressing global challenges.

About the University of Illinois Foundation:

Established in 1935, the University of Illinois Foundation is an independent Illinois not-for-profit membership corporation registered with the state of Illinois. As stated in its Articles of Incorporation, the role of the University of Illinois Foundation is procuring private support on behalf of the University. The Foundation functions as the independent official fundraising and private gift-receiving agency for the University of Illinois. As of June 30, 2009, the University of Illinois endowment was \$1.176 billion.

###