

NEWS RELEASE

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Students in Mississauga and Toronto win Laurier Science Challenge *Second science challenge has increased participation and tighter competition*

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WATERLOO – High school students from Mississauga and Toronto have won Ontario’s only comprehensive science competition – The Laurier Science Challenge.

Brian Rusciollelli, a student at Mentor College in Mississauga, edged out his competitors in the individual competition to capture first place in the second annual Laurier Science Challenge. Rusciollelli scored 40 out of a possible 60 marks (or 66.7 percent). Kasper Podgorski from the University of Toronto Schools (UTS) finished a close second with 39 out of 60 (or 65 percent) and schoolmate Azeezah Kanji scored 38.5 out of 60 (or 64.2 percent) to finish third.

In the team division, scores are determined by adding the top five individual scores. Students from the UTS formed the winning team for the second year in a row with a combined score of 183.5 out of a possible 300 (an average mark of 61.2 percent).

Laurier professors develop questions for the science challenge that go well beyond what’s expected in the high school curriculum.

“The students who write the exam do so because their school has identified them as being among the best science students in Ontario,” said Sheila McKee-Protopapas, program co-ordinator for the Laurier Science Challenge. “It may sound cliché, but there are no losers in this competition. Just being invited to participate means teachers recognize a very real aptitude.”

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The challenge consists of a two-part examination; students answer a series of multiple-choice questions in each of six disciplines and attempt three of six essay questions. The exam tests the students' knowledge and problem solving ability in biology, chemistry, kinesiology, mathematics, physics and psychology.

In only its second year, the challenge has grown by over 100 participants. Over 370 students from 48 high schools took the challenge this year, up from 270 participants and 40 high schools in the inaugural challenge last year. This year the competition drew teams from as far as far afield as Ottawa, Timmins and Windsor.

Students who demonstrate advanced ability in science compete in the Laurier Science Challenge for more than \$10,000 in individual and team cash awards and scholarships. As the first-place winner, Rusciolelli wins \$500 and a \$5,000 scholarship to study in any program offered by Laurier's faculty of science. Second-place finisher Kasper Podgorski from the UTS receives \$250 and a \$2,500 scholarship, while the third to tenth place finishers each receive \$100.

Along with UTS, the top five in the team competition included Ashbury College in Ottawa, Thomas A. Blakelock High School in Oakville, Centennial Collegiate and Vocational Institute in Guelph and Westdale Secondary School in Hamilton. Each school receives a \$200 prize and a plaque.