



SCIENCE CENTER HELPS STUDENTS TAKE CENTER STAGE

Since it opened in 2001, Phelps Science Center has proved an especially conducive environment for students pursuing high-level scientific research and competitions.

This year, more than 40 students participated in top national and international science competitions. Ten Exeter students were among 200 students from across the country who were named semifinalists for the U.S. Physics Olympiad, and two— Sherry Gong '07 of San Juan, PR, and Yingyu “Dan” Gao '08 of Hockessin, DE—were chosen for the national Olympiad team. This success is not new.

In 2006, Gong made the U.S. Physics Olympiad International Team and won a silver medal in Singapore, where she was among 382 student competitors from 88 countries. Gong also qualified for this year's team but chose instead to compete in the USA Mathematical Olympiad.

“The Physics Olympiad is for our best physics problemsolvers,” says Scott Saltman, department chair and holder of the John E. Smith Jr. Distinguished Professorship in Science. “The qualifying exam is based purely on Newtonian mechanics. The semifinal exam, which 10 of our students have moved up to, is more difficult and encompasses more material. Students who make the U.S. team are trained intensely in a wide variety of material and techniques at a nine-day summer camp at the University of Maryland.”

Besides being one of two Exeter finalists for both the 2006 and 2007 U.S. Physics Teams (and earning an honorable mention for his top-20 ranking on the USA Mathematical Olympiad final exam), Dan Gao was named a finalist in this year's USA Biology Olympiad national finals. Gao was one of 21 students nationwide to be selected for the prestigious USABO training sessions, two weeks of intensive theoretical and practical tutorials with leading biologists at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA.

Gao was also accepted in this year's Research Science Institute (RSI), a six-week program in mathematics, the sciences and engineering sponsored by the Center for Educational Excellence and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but a scheduling conflict kept him from attending.

And earlier this year, Gongmyung “Mike” Lee '07 was named a finalist in this year's Intel Science Talent Search (STS), formerly the Westinghouse Science Talent Search—America's oldest and most prestigious science competition for high school students. Two other seniors—Aristotle Manman of Kalamazoo, MI, and Keone Hon of Kamuela, HI—were among 300 semifinalists selected from 1,705 entries for this year's STS.



Sherry Gong '07 (above, center), who captured a silver medal at the 2006 International Physics Olympiad, is one of 40 Exeter students who took part top national and international science competitions this year.

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