

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of Dr. Alaina Nye, chair of the **Washington-Idaho Border Region** section of the American Chemical Society (ACS), and myself, Dr. Kristopher V. Waynant, we are pleased to announce that we will be participating in the **2016** U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad (USNCO). The primary goals of this program are to stimulate interest and achievement in chemistry among high school students throughout the United States and to provide recognition of outstanding young chemistry students, teachers, and schools. The full day local competition will take place on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016 on our Moscow, ID campus in Malcolm M. Renfrew Hall. Registration tables will be on the first floor and a map for free parking is provided. The event will begin at 10:00am with registration opening at 9:00am; lunch and T-shirt will be provided.

All students participating in the event will be recognized and presented a certificate. In addition students may receive recognition of outstanding performance on individual or team events. We hope that this recognition helps excite and engage these students towards careers in the STEM sciences. Finally, top-performing students on the written exam who also meet USNCO eligibility requirements will be nominated to participate in the US National Chemistry Olympiad. Students competing in the USNCO are eligible to be selected as members of the United States team for the International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO). For over 45 years, the United States has sent a team of four students to compete with nations around the world at the IChO. The students participate in both theoretical and laboratory examinations over several days. Gold, silver, and bronze medals are awarded to the best performers, and the IChO provides students the opportunity to interact with their peers from other countries. The **2015** international event was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, July 20-29<sup>th</sup>. The 2016 IChO events are to be announced!

Our immediate task is to encourage you and your students to participate in this program. The identification of the four-member U.S. team begins at the local school system level. It is the responsibility of the **Washington-Idaho Border** section to nominate students from this area to take to the USNCO national examination. In order to identify these students, we have decided to conduct a preliminary screening of students through the following process.

***Students can participate in one of two categories:***

**General Division:** Suitable for students taking or having completed first year high school chemistry, and possibly enrolled in AP Chemistry. Students in this division will take a shorter exam and may participate in an additional team experiment.

**US National Division:** Suitable for more advanced students such as those enrolled in AP chemistry courses or even higher-level chemistry. Students in this division take a lengthy ACS standardized exam that is significantly more difficult than the exam given to the general division.

**Students wishing to qualify for the USNCO national team must compete in this division. Qualification is based on performance on this ACS standardized exam.**

We encourage your school to participate in this academic Olympiad!

Dr. Nye and Dr. Waynant are working hard to iron out all the details on this event and expect more information including a schedule and practice procedures for the day's events in the near future. Dr. Waynant has been appointed the USNCO Coordinator for this area and please feel free to contact him with any questions regarding the event. We encourage you to enter students from your school in this competition by **completing and returning the enclosed registration form before January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016**. Thank you for helping us to promote chemical education in the Washington-Idaho border region.

We sincerely hope that you and some of your students will be able to participate in this fun and interesting event.

Sincerely,

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