

CREATIVE CHEMISTRY COMPETITION ATTRACTS BRIGHT FUTURE SCIENTISTS

Hundreds of young and bright high school students wearing goggles and white coats were seen pouring strange looking substance from one tube to another on 8/3 at the Chung Ling Chemistry Hall. It was a fair and square contest held by the Department of Chemistry for young chemistry enthusiasts. This 3 year old Chung Ling Creative Chemistry Competition attracted 218 teams consisted of 654 contestants from 53 high schools, the highest number so far. Each team was made up of three contestants.

The competition was divided into two stages with a written test on the basic knowledge of chemistry given in the first stage. The qualification threshold for the second stage was decided by the average score of the test from the three people on the team. As a result, 32 teams were qualified to attend the lab work that determined the champions. In the lab, contestants were asked to create colloidal gold (particles that are also known as "nanogold") produced in a liquid by reducing chloroauric acid with the help of a reducing agent, in this case, sodium borohydride. After several trials and errors, National Experimental High School at Hsinchu Science Park finally clinched the first place, winning NT\$30,000 prize money, followed by National Changhua Senior High School and National Chung-Li Senior High School, who won NT\$ 15,000 and NT\$ 10,500 respectively.

He Ying-you, a member of the champion team, was not daunted by the challenge despite the high difficulty presented by the experiment, as he had been informed about this technique at various lectures before. Other students, although didn't win big prizes, were already very excited about being able to attend and were impressed by the state-of-the-art equipment they found at TKU labs.

Three years ago when the competition was first inaugurated, it attracted 75 teams from 30 schools. Last year, it attracted 170 teams from 44 schools, and this year with 218 teams from 53 schools, the trend is certainly upward and optimistic, as pointed out by Wang Bo-cheng, the Chair of the Department of Chemistry. He is pleased with the expanding exposure of TKU in the science circle, and yet with this exposure, Jung-hua Tseng, Director of the Alumni Association of Department of Chemistry, is worried that next year they may have to look for a bigger venue if the trend continues.

Team competition aside, excellent individual performances in written test were also awarded with a MP3 (for the first and second place) or a six month prescription of “Science Monthly” (for the third place). (~Ying-hsueh Hu)

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High school contestants concentrate on their experiment at the 2008 Chung Ling Creative Chemistry

Competition held by the Department of Chemistry.