



Your child / school has been given the opportunity to participate in iGEM. iGEM stands for the International Genetically Engineered Machine Competition. This competition began in the summer of 2004 with 5 university teams. It has grown to 165 teams from 30 countries around the world participating in the 2011 season. While high school students have been part of teams in the collegiate division since about 2008, a dedicated iGEM High School Division was started in 2010. The iGEM HS Division is designed to allow high schools the ability to participate in the competition on their schedule and while addressing the specific needs of high school student teams which are different from collegiate teams.

The iGEM competition is the premiere competition in synthetic biology. The High School Division of the competition allows high school students to participate in this new field of biology. Synthetic biology takes well-known engineering principles such as abstraction and standardization, and applies them to biology to make it reliable, standard, and more of an engineering discipline. Engineers learn by building -- during the competition the students will design and build a biological machine using standard molecular biology techniques. Students will make use of kits containing genetic material to construct their system. They will then work to test, measure, and characterize their design.

iGEM provides teams an internet-based documentation center known as a wiki (like Wikipedia). Teams document their project throughout the competition season on the online wiki including information about the project, laboratory procedures, purpose of their machine, and profiles on the team members. This means that the students' names and pictures can be posted on the wiki. During the Jamboree, the final event where teams present their work, the judges award the best wiki prize at the Jamboree. Keep in mind that all information contained on the wiki can be viewed by any individual, although the information on the wiki can only be edited by someone with an iGEM user account and permission to edit the wiki.

Because of the nature of iGEM and the information that can be posted on the wiki, your permission will be required for your child / school to participate.

Safety Note: students are to be supervised by their team leader while conducting laboratory experiments. The team leader is responsible for teaching and ensuring laboratory safety.

For more information on iGEM see the following resources:

www.igem.org

2012hs.igem.org

If you have any questions, please direct them to any of the following people:

* Team Leader

* Rebecca Schini, iGEM High School Division Chair -- rebecca@igem.org

* iGEM Headquarters -- hq@igem.org