Dear science educators:

I am pleased to announce that this will be the 10th anniversary of the science fair at UC. Mark your calendars for March 15th, 2014 for the big event. Your school fairs need to be held prior to February 14th and the online registration must be completed for our fair by this date, (February 14th). Please inform your students that they need to complete the online registration as well as mail us copies of the forms along with the registration fee. [Be sure to keep the originals in their project notebook.] See more on this topic in the Registration Changes Section of this newsletter.

Changing of the Guard

We have some new Graduate Assistants who provide support for the fair. Jessie Richard will be assisting veteran Maggie McKnight in the fair office. We can still be reached at 556-4433 or UCsciencefair@uc.edu. Katie Quaintance will be joined by Alana Kennedy who will handle the judges’ registration this year. Also, this will be my last fair as director. My work at UC Blue Ash College has required my full attention, so I have requested that another individual take over the fair operations after this March. Associate Provost Robin Martin has agreed to assume the role of director of the fair. Robin and I will be coordinating the effort on this event so that she will be familiar with the program for the following year. Please join me in welcoming Robin and the GAs to our team. On a similar note, Lynn Elfner has retired as President of the Ohio Academy of Science. Dr. Stephen McConoughey has replaced Mr. Elfner in this role.

Registration Changes

Last year there were four students who appeared on our doorstep expecting to have a space on the floor for their posters. They had not used the online registration system, and some had not sent in the forms or registration fee, but brought them to the fair. We accommodated the students; however it created a number of issues and slowed the judging process as well as impacted our ability to prepare for the awards ceremony. Please remember that your students need to register online as well as mail in copies of the ISEF forms, consent form and registration fee prior to the fair. To this end we have modified the registration system and added some messages to assist with the process.
We have found that many students will start the online registration process, but fail to write down the project code and password when exiting. As a result several attempts are made to register. The system saves the information entered on each attempt. This results in several versions of the partial registration residing in the system. Therefore it is important that the code and password are recorded to save the student time re-entering their project data. We also require the student to verify the email address provided, since all future correspondence will be in the form of emails. Many times the student forgets to check their email and click on CONFIRM Your Email in the message. Once the student responds, the registration screen is shown and the student is asked to enter the Project Code and Password to complete the registration process. This is required in order to verify the email address is accurate. Once the Project Code and Password are entered, the previously entered information will be displayed. At the end of the registration process the student will be given multiple opportunities to print the forms. When finished printing the forms, the student can “Submit to Teacher” the registration information. Now it is the teacher’s time to verify the registration data and then submit it to UC.

There are also some additional notes included on our website to note the online registration requirement. We hope this will avoid any confusion in the future and all students will have an opportunity to register for our fair.

**Dean Regas is our featured Keynote Speaker**

As a highlight of the 10th anniversary of the fair, our keynote speaker is Dean Regas. Dean is more commonly known for being the co-host for his program on public television called Star Gazers. This popular program has been running for three years and is shown on over 100 stations. He has written over 100 astronomy articles and has interviewed several scientists for WVXU’s radio program "Looking Up with Dean Regas". Dean will give us an arm-chair tour of our solar system. Please join me for the keynote address on March 15th.

**The Best at State Science Day**

Once again students from UC’s fair have done exceptionally well at the State Science Day. Our students have the highest percentage of superiors of any regional fair in the state. This means that the projects that we judge to be superior, are also considered superior projects by the judges at the state fair. This past year 70 % of the projects sent to state received a superior rating.
Coaching Day is Friday, April 4th, 2014

Mark your calendars for April 4th, the date of the 2014 Coaching Day. This popular event has been a hit with students and parents who find the information very valuable before they attend the state fair in Columbus. We are one of the few fairs in Ohio that hold the coaching day and the result of hosting this event reflects in our high percentage of superior scores. During the morning, judges are invited back as coaches to discuss the student’s project and listen to the presentation. The comments recorded on the score cards are discussed and ways to improve the presentation are suggested. The poster is also reviewed for possible violations. Then, over lunch, representatives from University Libraries discuss researching science projects, creating a bibliography, and offer some resources that are available. [Please check our website for some of these resources.] We conclude with a preview of the experience of attending the state fair and some suggestions for dealing with the large gathering in Columbus.

Teacher Workshop at the fair

For the third year in a row Steve Geresy from the Hamilton County Educational Service Center will be presenting a workshop for teachers during the science fair. Steve’s program will be offered from 1 - 2:30 PM. Steve’s topic this year is on the Newly Released Assessment Guidelines (Blue Prints) for the Sciences. This popular workshop series will once again provide teachers with CEU credits, or for a discounted fee you can earn 1 graduate credit by spending the day with us. For more information contact Katie Quaintance at Katie.quaintance@uc.edu or 513-556-4267, or check the JUDGES page on our website.

Judges, you may sign up now!

The Judges Online Registration is now open for the 2014 fair. Typically we have approximately 50 – 60 teachers out of the total 250 judges that attend the fair. As you may know, the goal is to have one teacher paired with one scientist to create a judging team. The teacher plays a vital role in providing guidance on the knowledge level of the student when evaluating what score to assign a project. Please encourage your colleagues to become judges. As a benefit for sharing your Saturday with us, we provide free parking, breakfast, and a very appetizing hot lunch. If you stay for lunch, there are some very nice prizes that will be raffled during the meal. Thanks to all of our sponsors for their generous donations of Prizes. Here is the website to register:

https://www.uc.edu/ScienceFair/registration/JudgeRegistration.aspx
Do your high school students want to participate in ISEF in Los Angeles?

I have been asked by many high school students, why don’t we participate in the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). While our fair is affiliated with ISEF, the rules state that the host institution must fund all of the expenses for the student to attend the fair. The last ISEF fair that UC fair students attended was in 2010 in San Jose which cost $14,000 for 4 students and 2 chaperones. Unfortunately, the university can no longer afford this expense. In order to participate in ISEF, all funds to cover registration, lodging, flights, meals, etc. must be raised externally. This is where you can assist. A designated fund has been established with the UC Foundation for making donations to send students to ISEF. In order to prepare for taking students to the fair, the funds would need to be received no later than mid-January 2014. As a ballpark estimate, at a minimum $6,000 would be required to send one student and one chaperone to Los Angeles for the week-long event. If there aren’t enough funds raised to send a student and chaperone this May, those funds will be kept in reserve to be put toward sending students to ISEF the following year. Below is the UC Foundation website for making a donation.

https://webapps2.uc.edu/foundation/gift/gift.aspx

Be sure to select:

DESIGNATE PROGRAM
Science Program
Southwest Ohio District Science and Engineering EXPO

REMINDER: Online registration CLOSES Friday, February 14th, 2014
Fair date: Saturday, March 15, 2014

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Cruse
Director of Science and Engineering EXPO