

DSU Hosts First-Ever Delaware Brain Bee

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DSU was the site of the first-ever Brain Bee Competition in Delaware on Jan 9 and by the end of the competition, Amy Forster of the Charter School of Wilmington won 1st place for the best neurology knowledge among the contestants.

Held in the Mishoe Science Center on campus, the inaugural Delaware Brain Bee intellectually pitted 14 students from Caesar Rodney High School, Charter School of Wilmington, and Indian River High School against each other.

The Delaware Brain Bee was conducted in the same elimination style as the Spelling Bee competition that is held across the country. However instead of being given words to spell, contestants in the Brain Bee were given oral questions about neuroscience that they had to answer correctly or be eliminated.



Amy Forster (center), the first-place winner of the first-ever Delaware Brain Bee, is congratulated by Dr. Princy Mennella, (r) DSU assistant professor of biology, and state Sen. Colin Bonini.

Ms. Forster's first-place performance won her an all-expense paid trip to Baltimore, Md. where she will represent Delaware in the U.S. National Brain Bee on March 19-20. There are 52 other competitions across the United States that will send their winners to that National Brain Bee competition.

Dr. Princy Quadros Mennella, an assistant professor of neuroscience and the coordinator of the Delaware Brain Bee, said with so much to learn about the brain in connection with diseases such as schizophrenia, depression, autism and Alzheimer's, it is important to cultivate interest in neuroscience among young people.

"We need bright young minds to help make new discoveries in the field of neuroscience," Dr. Mennella said. "Educating our nation's high school students and getting them excited about the brain is important because one of them could be the next neuroscientist to make a breakthrough in our understanding of the many brain diseases that afflict our society."

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Prior DSU's facilitation of the event to make it possible in the First State, Delaware previously had been one of the few states that did not hold a Brain Bee competition nor have a representative in the National Brain Bee. Dr. Mennella said it is hoped that more Delaware high schools will engage their students to compete in future competitions.

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