



January 28, 2022

Dear Advanced Chemistry Teacher:

The Orange County Section of the American Chemical Society (ACS) is sponsoring the 2022 Local Section Exam (LSE) for Advanced Chemistry (first & second year) students. The sixty-question multiple-choice exam will be held on Saturday, March 5 from 8:30 – 11:00 a.m. in the Business Sciences and Technology Innovation Center (BSTIC) at **Irvine Valley College** (IVC) in Irvine if the LSE can be given in person. Competitors should arrange to be dropped off or if they intend to park purchase a \$5 parking permit at the dispenser found between lots 4 and 5 and display it on their car's dashboard.

This is the first step that could lead to an invitation to compete in the 2022 United States National Chemistry Olympiad (USNCO) and 2022 International Chemistry Olympiad (IChO). Each high school may select up to four advanced (AP or IB level) students to compete in the LSE Competition. However, a student must have U.S. citizenship or have legal, permanent resident status (possess a green card) to advance and participate in the USNCO.

COVID Requirements: If the exam can be given in person, we will require that all students comply with the requirements that national ACS has set (see below) for the USNCO. Also, our testing venue requires that all who enter the campus are fully vaccinated. Therefore, full vaccination status according to CDC guidelines is required to compete in the LSE competition. Students will be required to present a vaccine card to proctors at the testing venue before being admitted to the testing room. Please note that CDC guidelines may include a booster by the February registration date. No accommodations can be given by our local section for these ACS national guidelines since unvaccinated students pose a danger to proctors and other students.

We have discussed with our legal team the conditions under which an in-person component can be administered. In addition to meeting any requirements of your venue and meeting local health regulations, we would require that:

- *All participants and volunteers wear masks (without valves) for the entirety of the exam*
- *All participants and volunteers be fully vaccinated (definition as provided by the Centers for Disease Control) at least 14 days before the exam date. Local Sections would be responsible for confirming vaccination status before entry into the testing venue.*
- *All participants are expected to comply with all health and safety guidelines.*
- *In light of events surrounding COVID-19, this is an appropriate time to remind ourselves of the risks incident to participating in USNCO Exams in 2022. Even with every reasonable precaution to keep you safe as outlined for you by the CDC, ACS cannot fully eliminate all risks of harm to participants or guarantee their safety, especially from risks posed by COVID-19 or its variant strains. **Ultimately, everyone is responsible for their own safety.***

The LSE will also determine the top Advanced Chemistry student from each participating high school and the top six high school teams in the county (see **special pandemic team rules** posted on the ocacs.org website). The top ten individual students having U.S. citizenship or possessing a green card will be eligible to participate in the 2022 USNCO on Saturday, April 23. National rules stipulate that no more than two students per school may participate in the USNCO on April 23. Students must bring a nonprogrammable calculator, photo identification, a facemask with no valves and their **COVID vaccination card** (or photograph of it) for both tests. **Absolutely no**

programmable or graphing calculators will be allowed for either the LSE or USNCO tests! More information about exam protocol will be shared after registration closes in late February.

If a student competing in the USNCO finishes among the top twenty nationally, they will be invited to the Olympiad Study Camp to compete for the **four** spots available to the U.S. team. Last year, the four finalists representing the U.S ended up with two gold medals and two silver medals in the virtual competition held in Osaka, Japan. There were 79 competing countries. This year the competition will be held in Tianjin, China (virtually if necessary).

Our ACS section has received national recognition for the excellence of our Olympiad program. It is a tribute to all the outstanding high school chemistry programs in the county. If you wish to learn more about the Chemistry Olympiad, go to www.acs.org and do a search of the site with the key word **Olympiad**. You will find extensive information regarding the program including copies of previous exams.

To register your students for the competition please go to www.ocacs.org between **Wednesday, February 16 and 11:59 pm on Friday, February 25**. Please note that the registration window is much later this year due to all the uncertainty associated with the pandemic. Click on the **Education** tab then select **The Chemistry Olympiad** and fill out the Entry Form. **It is strongly recommended that students are registered with their own personal email due to problems encountered with school district firewalls in previous years.** A map of the college can be found on this part of the website as well, or go to the Irvine Valley College website.

Also, we are looking for a few more chemistry teachers to assist us in the administration of the exam on March 5. Please check the box on the registration form if you can assist.

We strongly discourage schools sending only one student to this exam, which is designed to be an internal competition among your school's students. If only one student takes the exam, s/he will receive a certificate of participation, but may not be acknowledged as your "best" student on the school's perpetual plaque. If you feel that there is a good reason why your school is entering only one student (who should be recognized as the best student from your school), please file an appeal with Carol Grimes at cgrimes@gwc.cccd.edu.

It is also still possible that due to the pandemic that the March 5 competition will need to be held remotely as was done last year. Further instructions will be supplied after registration closes if that were to occur.

Additionally, for students who didn't make their team of four for their school we will accept the first 20 individual registrations on a first come, first served basis. Registration for these students will open at 9:00 am on Saturday, February 26 and close at 11:59 pm on Saturday, February 26 (please note the small-time window). There will be a fee of \$20 for all self-registrants. Please direct these students to the ocacs.org website to register and caution them to register early in the time window because these spots are expected to fill rapidly.

Please feel free to contact me at lnbshenton@gmail.com if you have any questions. Thank you and best of luck to you and your students.

Sincerely,
Brent Shenton
Olympiad Coordinator