



## High School Teams Selected as Finalists for National STEM Competition

- ***Winning Genes in Space student experiment will be carried out on the International Space Station***

**May 21, 2019, Boston, Massachusetts** – Five teams of high school students were named finalists in the *Genes in Space* annual science competition, which challenges students from grades 7 through 12 to propose DNA analysis experiments that address real-life space exploration challenges. The winning experiment will be performed aboard the International Space Station (ISS). This year, more than 1700 students working across 789 teams submitted proposals to the competition.

The five finalist teams will present their proposals to a panel of scientists and educators at the 2019 ISS Research and Development Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, on July 31<sup>st</sup>. The panel will select and announce a winning team at the conclusion of the conference, on August 1<sup>st</sup>. The winners will prepare their experiment to be carried out on the ISS and will watch their experiment launch to space. Scientists from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology will mentor the finalists as they prepare their presentations, and will continue to work with the winning team as they ready their experiment for spaceflight.

### **The 2019 Finalists:**

**Kevin Chen (16) and Alexa Knee (16)** from Smithtown High School East, Saint James, NY

Topic: Mitochondrial DNA repair dynamics in microgravity

**Claire Jin (16), Tori Sodeinde (15), and Jessica Zhang (15)** from State College Area High School, State College, PA

Topic: Cellular mechanisms underlying astronaut bone density loss

**Abinand Parthasarathy (16)** from Clear Lake High School, Houston, TX

Topic: Reassortment of genetic material in the influenza A virus in space

# News Release



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**Finsam Samson (18) and Yujie Wang (18)** from Troy High School, Troy, MI  
Topic: Neural physiology and plasticity in mammals during long-term spaceflight

**Vivian Yee (15)** from International Academy, Bloomfield Township, MI  
Topic: Influence of microgravity on cytoskeleton organization during gamete formation

## **About Genes in Space**

Genes in Space is a national STEM contest that challenges students in grades 7 through 12 to design DNA analysis experiments using the ISS National Lab, a platform for cutting-edge research and technology development that enables future space exploration. Genes in Space accepts applications between January and April each year. The contest is a collaboration between miniPCR Bio™ and ISS prime contractor Boeing, with generous support from CASIS (manager of the ISS National Lab), Math for America, and New England Biolabs®.

Learn more: [www.GenesInSpace.org](http://www.GenesInSpace.org)

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