

## AU's 48-Hour Challenge is back, bigger and better

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Alfred University's Institute for Science, Mathematics and Technology Education is again issuing a high-stakes challenge to top high school students: Solve our problem in 48 hours, and win \$5,000. "Last year, we had 11 teams participate in the challenge, which was held on campus during the last week in June," said Dr. G. David Toot, professor of physics, director of the Institute for Science, Mathematics and Technology Education, and by virtue of that title, also the "head mastermind" behind the 48-Hour Challenge. "This year, our goal is to have 20 teams participate." Deadline for registering for this year's competition is March 15, Toot noted. The "masterminds" are a committee of faculty members who are developing the problem for the teams to solve, as well as clues to help them. Last year's scenario involved a broken bottle and plants that died mysteriously. The 2004 competition ended in a tie between teams from Dryden Central School and West Irondequoit High School. Each team took home \$5,000. South Side High School from Rockville Center on Long Island won third place. Teams are being invited to campus to compete in the challenge June 27-30. After they arrive, they will be given a problem to solve, using a variety of analytical equipment available at the University, explained Toot. Teams must be comprised of five students and two advisors. Student members of the winning team will each receive a \$500 check, and the school that sponsors them will receive a \$2,500 check. Registrations are now being accepted through the competition website: <http://engineering.alfred...> teams have registered, they are given passwords that will allow them to access a special clues section on the competition website. "Some of the clues posted them by our masterminds (the faculty committee), will be valuable, and others will not, but teams won't know which is which until they actually arrive on campus for the competition," said Toot. Some of the clues may include descriptions of some of the analytical equipment that will be available to students, from equipment for ion chromatography to a scanning electron microscope, and mass and infrared spectrometers, and what kinds of information it can provide to the competitors. The masterminds, in addition to Toot, include: Dr. Jalal Bahdadchi, assistant professor of electrical engineering; Dr. Alexis Clare, professor of glass science; Dr. Andrew Eklund, assistant professor of chemistry; Dr. Matthew Hall, assistant professor of glass science; Dr. Michele Hluchy, professor of geology and environmental studies, and Dr. Kathryn Kohel, assistant professor of biology. professor of mathematics; and Dr. Kathryn Kohel, assistant professor of biology, from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Alfred University will cover room and board while the teams are on campus; their sponsoring school districts will be responsible for transportation costs. The competition is made possible by a gift to Alfred University from Erick Laine, an Alfred University trustee and chairman of the board of Alcas Corporation in Olean, which makes Cutco and K-Bar products, and his wife, Marianne, as well as the Cutco Foundation. An engineering himself, Laine is sponsoring the competition because he "believes very strongly in the value of an engineering education and hopes to encourage students' interest in the profession." Additional details about the competition are available at the website: <http://engineering.alfred.edu>/For more information about Alfred University, visit [www.alfred.edu](http://www.alfred.edu)