Horton, Jim A

From: Carafano, Peter [pcc03@admin.fsu.edu]
Sent: Sunday, September 22, 2013 2:18 PM
To: Horton, Jim A
Cc: Christophe Reglat; Rick Gargan
Subject: Student Astronaut Challenge
Attachments: 2014 Textxbook.docx

Jim,

I just wanted to follow up our conversation with information regarding the purpose of the Student Astronaut Challenge. As we discussed the Astronaut Challenge is entering its third year and has seen exponential growth in state participation since its inception. Last year we had 200 students representing 35 schools state wide compete in the regional qualifier to earn one of the eight spots in the finals.

The challenge was designed to encompass several ideals in regards to its goal of reaching high school students and fostering interest in Science and Engineering. The challenge exists to engage students in these fields so they may view them as potential occupations while also providing teachers an instructional method for the development of team work and communication in a real world environment.

1. The challenge is designed to interest a large group of students in STEM through the Regional Qualifier which requires them to study a textbook designed around the principles of Engineering and Aerospace science. This material becomes the basis of the qualifier exam which is the method used to determine the 12 finalists for this year's competition.

2. All teams start on an even playing field since the success or failure is based on the abilities of the five person team to work together. Regardless of the socio-economic background or the financial abilities of the participating school all have the ability to qualify and compete. Unlike many other science related competitions, such as robotics challenges, students are not limited by their resources. This was demonstrated last year by the broad spectrum of schools competing. Last year's finalists include teams from the inner city of Miami, the rural areas near Ocala as well as from Central Orland and Tallahassee.

3. The challenge immerses students in real world problem solving, it shows them the practical application of their studies and opens them up to the challenging world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

4. The final competition, to be held at the Kennedy Space Center, allows the 12 finalist team participants to meet and speak to people working in STEM occupations. It gives them a change to be exposed to the real heroes of the various STEM professions and provides them a forum to interact, foster an interest and learn from these professionals.

We have, at this point in time, obtained the Support of the Department of Education and Florida State University in managing the State of Florida Student Astronaut Challenge. The Kennedy Space Center has volunteered to provide the forum for this year's competition granting access to their facilities for all participants. Coaxis International has been our Corporate Sponsor since the onset of this project. They helped fund the initial construction of our Space Flight Simulator and supply technical support for our Web site and operation of the simulator.

Presently our desire is to develop a relationship with an organization, such as yours, to support the Engineering challenge component of the competition and help us continue to reach out to high school students state wide. We welcome any advice, assistance, monetary or man-power support you may be able to provide to help us to continue to improve and develop this program.

I have attached a copy of this year's student manual for the regional qualifier as well as our website location.

http://www.astronautchallenge.com/

Sincerely,

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