

**From:** "[REDACTED]"

**To:** "jeevacation@gmail.com" <jeevacation@gmail.com>

**Subject:** Fwd: iGEM Sponsorship Query

**Date:** Wed, 06 Jan 2010 06:59:39 +0000

**Attachments:** smime.p7s

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FYI

I will bcc you on my reply.

-----Original Message-----

From: Randy Rettberg <[REDACTED]>

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tue, Jan 5, 2010 7:25 pm

Subject: Re: iGEM Sponsorship Query

Dear Melanie,

I am the Director of iGEM at MIT. Thank you for your interest in sponsoring iGEM.

To answer your last question first, iGEM operates out of MIT, so contributions go to us through MIT. We are setting up a separate iGEM Foundation because iGEM has grown too large to fit well within MIT. That foundation is not registered yet, but probably will be in the next 6 months.

To learn more about iGEM, you can see our web pages at <http://2009.igem.org>. A brief summary is presented at <http://2009.igem.org/About>.

Each year, we start with a blank ( well, almost blank ) web site and the student teams work until the Jamboree in November, filling the web site with their projects. So, the 2010 web site is blank and the best way to see what happens is to look at the 2009 web site.

We require the teams to use the web site to document their projects and the judges look at the web sites at the end of the competition. Thus, the best way to learn about the competition is to look at the iGEM 2009 site. You will see iGEM in the student's own words.

Additionally, at the Jamboree, we make video recordings of the team presentations. You can download their powerpoint slides and watch the videos.

The best way to explore the team wikis, to watch the videos, and learn about the projects is to go to <http://ung.igem.org/Results?year=2009> .

To answer some of your other organizational and financial questions:

1. iGEM is run by "iGEM Headquarters" an activity of my lab at MIT. HQ is staffed by Meagan, our Assistant Director, a temporary employee, and myself. I am a Principal Research Engineer in Biological Engineering and CSAIL at MIT.
2. We have an awards and judging committee of 5 experienced biologists who manage a group of 54 judges in 2009.
3. Most of the funds are raised by the teams. The teams work at their schools over the summer. The teams pay iGEM HQ (via MIT) \$1250 to register in 2009 (that must increase to about \$2000 in 2010) They also pay to attend the Jamboree at MIT in November.
4. The attendance fees cover the cost of holding the Jamboree (Food, Venue, COncference Services, and similar expenses). The team fees and sponsors pay for iGEM HQ.
5. We have a declining NSF sponsorship for iGEM Headquarters and the Registry of Standard

Biological Parts. The Registry is the common collection of biological parts that teams get from at the beginning of the summer and give back to at the end of the summer.

6. iGEM 2009 has 110 teams register from 26 countries. About 1700 people were formally associated with teams over the summer. 1150 people attended the Jamboree at MIT in November.

7. We see growth continuing at about 50% per year as in the past. Except, in 2009, teams had to register at the end of March 2009 during some of the worst economic news of a generation. We only had 33% growth in 2009. We are preparing for about 175 to 180 teams for iGEM 2010. We will prepare for about 250 teams and 4000 participants in 2011.

8. We have been able to hold the Jamboree at MIT in the past. For 2010, we can still hold the presentations on campus by occupying all of the large auditoriums, However, MIT has no venue large enough for the awards ceremony. We are renting a large ballroom at the Hynes convention center.

9. There are no financial prizes or scholarships awarded by iGEM.

10. Our three most pressing needs are:

A. We cannot run iGEM with a staff of three and must hire immediately. This is obvious.

B. We must either develop regional jamborees and a world championship, or we must move to a conference center. This must happen in 2011 and we must decide now.

C. We must develop iGEM into an independent not-for profit so that it can thrive beyond my activities at MIT.

D. The teams and students are doing well and we need only support them and make iGEM better every year.

You can also learn more about iGEM from the December issue of Nature Biotechnology. In particular, look at Christina Smolke's commentary here:

<http://www.nature.com/nbt/journal/v27/n12/full/nbt1209-1099.html>

Please let me know if you have more questions. I would be happy to speak with you on the phone.

Also, please let me know what type of sponsorship would interest the private philanthropy.

Thank you,

Randy Rettberg  
Director, iGEM  
Biological Engineering, CSAIL,  
MIT

On Jan 5, 2010, at 7:37 PM, [REDACTED] wrote:

Hello there Randy.

I am affiliated with a private philanthropy that has taken an interest in the iGEM work. From what I can see online, it appears that your program gathers undergraduate students from around the world to compete in a synthetic biology contest. How can I learn more about the organizational structure of iGEM so that I might pass along the information for funding consideration? Important considerations - among others - would include total operational expenditures (cost to run program annually), amount of budget dedicated to prizes/scholarships as part of total budget, and 3-5 vision for the work.

This email works just fine to reach me initially, and I am happy to read through webpages or documentation via soft copy. Once I have the opportunity to understand the basics and learn a little more, I would be open to a phone conversation as well.

The interest of the private philanthropy would be to offer support for the work in a charitable and anonymous fashion - through traditional IRS mechanisms. As I could not find an IRS 990 for iGEM I am assuming that funds are channeled through MIT?

Thank you very much for your time,  
melanie

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