

## Delaware student advances to International BioGENEius Challenge

**Chicago, Ill. (April 24, 2013)** – For the third straight year, one of Delaware’s own did the First State proud at the U.S. National BioGENEius Challenge, a scientific research competition for high school students who demonstrate an exemplary understanding of biotechnology.

Bansri Patel, a junior at Sussex Technical High School in Georgetown, was named as one of 10 finalists in the national competition and moved on to compete in Tuesday’s International BioGENEius Challenge, taking on 13 other high school students from the United States, Australia and Canada.

Natalie Ng, of Monta Vista High School in Cupertino, Calif., emerged as the first place winner in the international challenge and earned the top prize, a \$7,500 cash award.

Patel made the national round after placing as one of two finalists in the Delaware BioGENEius Challenge earlier this year. Her research project is “Evaluating the Behavioral and Developmental Effects of BPA and BPS on the Model Invertebrate *C. elegans*.” Joining Patel in the national challenge was Anna Gonye, a junior at the Charter School of Wilmington, whose project was “The Effects of Environmental Toxins on Planarian Regeneration.”

“The success of Bansri and Anna on the national level indicates great promise for their futures and for our future,” Delaware Governor Jack Markell said. “Innovation is a major part of Delaware’s past, and it will be an even bigger part of tomorrow. These two young people demonstrate the potential of biotech innovation of the future.”

Kelvin Lee, Director of the Delaware Biotechnology Institute, echoed Gov. Markell’s praise of Delaware’s rising biotech stars.

“Our Delaware BioGENEius students continue to amaze and inspire us,” said Kelvin Lee, Director of the Delaware Biotechnology Institute. “Bansri and Anna are no exception. Their success in this competition is a direct result of their hard work and clear enthusiasm for science.”

Delaware has been well represented since it first began sending students to compete at the national level three years ago. Achille Tenkiang, from the Charter School of Wilmington, and Priyen Patel, from Sussex Technical High School, made it to the international competition in 2011 and represented Delaware at the national level in 2012.

In 2011, Tenkiang, at the time a junior, was one of 10 finalists from the United States to advance to the international competition. Priyen Patel was chosen as the U.S. National

BioGENEius Challenge Media Award winner during his junior year in 2011, and went on to earn an invitation to the White House Science Fair in 2012, where he met with President Obama.

Supporters of the Delaware BioGENEius Challenge include AstraZeneca, DuPont, Fraunhofer, Gore, QPS, Siemens and the Delaware Biotechnology Institute. Teachers and Delaware BioGENEius Challenge finalists were celebrated by Governor Markell at a recent event at the Delaware Biotechnology Institute in Newark.

The International BioGENEius Challenge is organized by the Biotechnology Institute, the national organization dedicated to biotechnology education, and sponsored by Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of the sanofi-aventis Group, a leading global pharmaceutical company, and Johnson & Johnson Pharmaceutical Research & Development, L.L.C. (J&JPRD), one of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies.

### **About the Delaware Economic Development Office**

The Delaware Economic Development Office is an executive state agency responsible for attracting new investors and businesses to the state, promoting the expansion of existing industry, assisting small and minority-owned businesses, promoting and developing tourism and creating new and improved employment opportunities for all citizens of the State. Visit [dedo.delaware.gov](http://dedo.delaware.gov).

### **About the Delaware Biotechnology Institute**

The Delaware Biotechnology Institute is a partnership among government, academia and industry to help establish the First State as a center of excellence in biotechnology and the life sciences. The Institute's mission is to facilitate a biotechnology network of people and facilities to enhance existing academic and private-sector research, catalyze unique cross-disciplinary research and education initiatives, and to foster the entrepreneurship that creates high-quality jobs.

### **About the Biotechnology Institute**

The Biotechnology Institute is an independent, national nonprofit organization dedicated to education about the present and future impact of biotechnology. Its mission is to engage, excite and educate the public, particularly students and teachers, about biotechnology and its immense potential for solving human health, food and environmental problems. For more information, visit [www.biotechinstitute.org](http://www.biotechinstitute.org).

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