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## PROGRAMS

# 2020 Chemistry Olympiad team named

The COVID-19 pandemic moves July competition online

by **Andrea Widener**

JUNE 16, 2020

The US team that will compete in the 52nd International Chemistry Olympiad, which will be conducted fully online because of the COVID-19 pandemic, were selected on June 12.

The team was chosen after an online study camp that took place May 31 to June 12. It was organized by the American Chemical Society in collaboration with the University of Maryland, College Park.

The team members are **Anugrah Chemparathy** of Dougherty Valley High School in California; **Alex Li** and **Alec Zhu** of Lexington High School in Massachusetts; and **Ananthan Sadagopan** of Westborough High School in Massachusetts.

The first alternate is **Nicholas Tsao** of St. Mark's School in Texas, and the second alternate is **Michael Han** of Dougherty Valley High School.

The online study camp is something new, but the mentors worked to run it in a similar way as in-person camps. That includes social events like games and a talent show so the participants could get to know each other.

"It was really evident how much effort the mentors put into making the camp as close to the real experience as they could, despite it being online, and I think we all really appreciated that," Sadagopan says. "Overall, it was a really rewarding experience."

The Olympiad trainers called in former campers and former mentors to help make the experience the best it could be given the circumstances.

"We tried to make the best of a situation that we had no control over. We used technology to the utmost," says head mentor Melissa Barranger Mathys, a chemistry professor at Ursuline College in Ohio. "And I think we did a good job."

The **52nd International Chemistry Olympiad**, hosted by Turkey, will be held online on July 25. The lab-based portion of the competition has been dropped, which eliminates many of the opportunities for mistakes inherent in the lab section, the team members say.

"Based on historical trends, the absence of a lab section could be greatly beneficial," Zhu says.



Credit: Courtesy of Anugrah Chemparathy

Anugrah Chemparathy



Credit: Courtesy of Alex Li

Alex Li

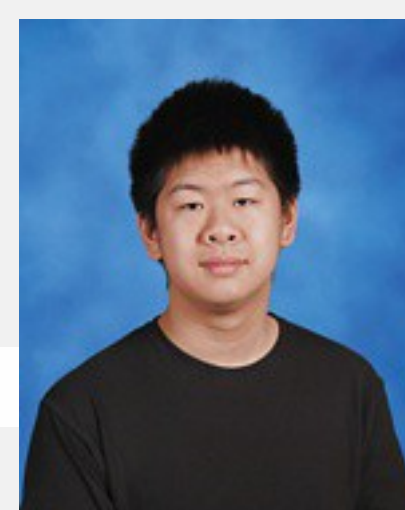


Credit: Courtesy of Ananthan Sadagopan

Ananthan Sadagopan

## CORRECTION

This story was updated on June 17, 2020, to give the correct date for the 52nd International Chemistry Olympiad. The date of the International Chemistry Olympiad is July 25th, 2020, not June 25th.



Credit: Courtesy of Alec Zhu

Alec Zhu

## CORRECTION

This story was updated on June 17, 2020, to correctly identify the first and second alternates and to correct the source of the quote. The first alternate is Nicholas Tsao, and the second alternate is Michael Han. Not the other way around. The last quote is from Alec Zhu, not Anugrah Chemparathy.

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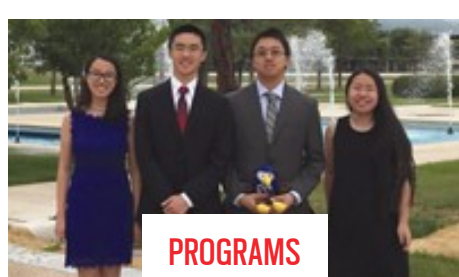
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