

Hosting a TEAMS Competition

Ten Tips for a Successful Competition Day



Ten Tips for Hosting a TEAMS Competition

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Hosting a TEAMS competition is a great way for universities to give local middle and high school students a chance to challenge themselves outside of the classroom and experience a university setting.

TEAMS (Tests of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics and Science) is a one-day annual engineering competition designed to help students apply math and science knowledge in practical, creative ways to solve real-world engineering challenges.

Auburn University has been a successful TEAMS host since 2007. Jessica Taylor is the Director of Recruiting and Scholarships for the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering at Auburn University. She finds value in working with young students and helping them explore the world of engineering through the TEAMS competition. Below are her top ten tips for hosting a TEAMS competition.



Jessica Taylor,
Auburn University

1

Create a TEAMS competition that works in conjunction with your recruitment and outreach goals.

The TEAMS competition brings prospective engineering students to campus and provides them with challenges that deal with solving real-world problems. The competition helps create a pipeline of future Auburn engineering students — half of the 56 seniors who participated in TEAMS last year entered Auburn as first-year engineering students this fall.



2

Plan and promote the TEAMS competition beginning in the fall.

Begin planning and promoting TEAMS in early fall. Auburn starts with a “Save the Date” mailing to local middle and high schools which contains competition-day information such as directions to campus and where to park, nearby lodging, and attractions in the area. This is especially helpful for the teams coming from farther away.

3 Don't be afraid to stray from the past or implement new ideas.

The most overwhelming part of my first year coordinating the TEAMS competition at Auburn was deciding to change the format of the competition — but it turned out to be a huge success. In the past, Auburn scheduled the competition on the same day as the annual engineering open house day which attracted between 2,000 and 3,000 prospective students. I felt that TEAMS students would be better supported if they had their own day on campus, so I made this change in my first year hosting the competition. Even though it meant more work in terms of planning, implementing this new idea was very successful and better showcased the campus to TEAMS participants.

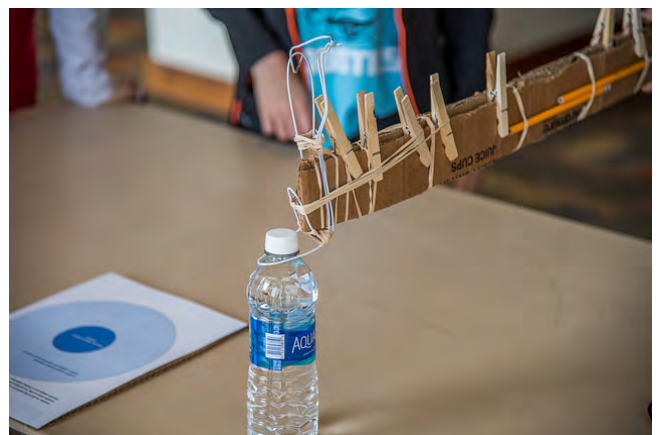


4 Create a timeline for planning the competition.

Create a planning timeline (for example, identify when ballrooms and campus parking need to be reserved). This makes it easier to remember the behind-the-scene details and prevents accidentally missing a deadline.

5 Think through the details of the day.

Planning details of the day will help the competition run more smoothly and gives a positive first impression to prospective students. For example, when students first arrive to Auburn's campus, they are greeted at a check-in table with a "welcome" bag containing information about their day and university promotional material. The information varies depending on the age of the student so that high school upperclassmen receive more intense recruiting information. After check-in, the competitors receive breakfast and are seated at a table where a blank information request card is waiting. Completing and submitting this card is their entry into a prize drawing.



6

Incorporate faculty into the day.

The day begins with a breakfast for competitors with invited faculty. Time is allotted for mingling, followed by a faculty welcome and the prize drawing (from the collected information cards). After the multiple choice component of the competition is completed, students attend a “browse” session where they meet engineering staff and faculty, browse various disciplines within engineering, and learn about student organizations. A tour of the engineering buildings is led by student ambassadors.

**7**

Utilize college student volunteers.

University student volunteers can help competition day run smoothly. They are recruited at Auburn via emails to the engineering student volunteer database, engineering student organizations, and student ambassadors. Student volunteers assist in welcoming competitors, checking them in, collecting their information cards, escorting them to various locations, and monitoring the competition. At Auburn, one student volunteer is assigned to two tables for close monitoring during competition and proximity in case of any questions.

**8**

Devote part of the day to interactive sessions that are not the competition.

Between TEAMS-related competitions, competitors at Auburn attend a “browse” session and go on a tour of the engineering buildings. The tour typically features an area of engineering that complements the competition theme. For example, the 2017 theme was “Engineering the Environment,” so the students spent time at the Biosystems Engineering Facility. The opportunity to talk with current Auburn students and faculty and tour the campus gave students a better and more interactive experience.

9

Ask for feedback, and be responsive to it.

After the competition ends, students and coaches are asked for feedback about the day. This feedback is incorporated into the planning for next year.



10

Reach out to TSA with any questions.

The Technology Student Association (TSA) provides a TEAMS Host Guide with information on preparing for the competition, planning strategies, tips on using volunteers, a sample schedule, and a planning checklist. Hosts also receive information on where to find help for running the competition and how to manage the scores post-competition. Additional questions can be addressed to the TEAMS staff via phone or email and are answered quickly.

Have more questions about hosting a TEAMS competition? Visit teams.tsaweb.org or contact Jenn Glover, TEAMS Manager, at jglover@tsaweb.org.