

# 2017 USABO National Finalists' Bios



**Nithya Sri Attaluri**  
*Lynbrook High School*  
San Jose, CA

Nithya Attaluri is a sophomore at Cupertino High School. She is extremely interested in cellular biology and computer science and hopes to use computational techniques to solve biological problems in the future. At school, she is an officer in the Student Doctors and Women in Technology clubs, as well as an organizer of *TinoHacks*, a hackathon for high-schoolers in the Bay Area. During her free time, she can be found browsing *Goodreads* for new books, listening and singing along to music, and entertaining others with her collection of (dismal) biology jokes.



**Prem Chintalpudi**  
*Dougherty Valley High School*  
San Ramon, CA

Prem Chintalpudi is a junior attending Dougherty Valley High School (DVHS), San Ramon, California. He particularly enjoys the fields of molecular biology, biochemistry, and organic chemistry. His interest in these topics began as a result of his enjoyment of engineering and the beauty of atoms and complex systems. In addition, Prem is a member of his school's Science Bowl team, and participates in his school's Quiz Bowl competitions, the DVHS Biology Club, and his school's VEX Robotics Club. In his free time, he can be found practicing random chemical syntheses, and he particularly enjoys walking to explore surrounding territory.



**Nanki Chugh**  
*Santa Monica High School*  
Santa Monica, CA

Nanki Chugh is a junior at Santa Monica High School. She is a member of the Science and Ocean Bowl Teams, specializing in biology. This year, her Ocean's Science Bowl Team placed First at National Ocean's Science Bowl. Nanki is Founder and President of *Give A Life*, a club dedicated to providing funds for medical treatment to children living in India with immune deficiency disorders. In addition, Nanki is an accomplished violinist and concertmistress of Santa Monica High School's highest level orchestra. She has had the opportunity to be a soloist multiple times with orchestras (recipient of Palisades Alfred Newman Award), and performed in Tuscany, Italy with her string quartet in July 2014 as part of the *Incontri in Terra di Sienna Music Festival*. In her free time, Nanki enjoys reading, writing poetry, playing tennis, and Bollywood films and music.



### **Charles Dai**

*West Windsor-Plainsboro High School*

**Plainsboro, NJ**

Charles Dai is a senior attending West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North in New Jersey. His favorite topic in biology is genetics. He is one of his school's Science Olympiad team captains, and he heads the *Envirothon* team. He is also an all-states cellist. Last year, he received High Honors for the US National Chemistry Olympiad. In his free time, he likes to put off work in order to browse the Internet and play word games. His favorite comic strips are *xkcd* and *Calvin and Hobbes*. Charles is an avid piano and hulusi performer, and a varsity tennis player. He will be attending Cornell University in the fall. .



### **William Alexander Ellsworth**

*George Walton Comprehensive High School*

**Marietta, GA**

William Ellsworth is a sophomore at George Walton Comprehensive High School. William has a deep passion for neuroscience; he hopes to practice neurology and work as a researcher focused on Alzheimer's Disease and other neurodegenerative diseases. William placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the *USA Brain Bee* and was a semifinalist for the U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad (USNCO). When he's not reading about recent developments in neuroscience or making biology jokes with his friends, William can be found getting destroyed in basketball, ping pong, and tennis.



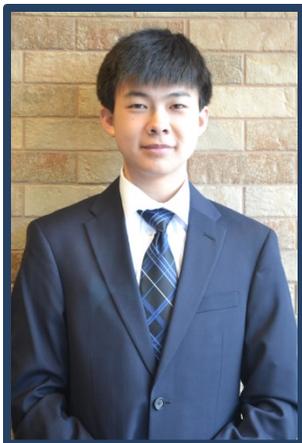
### **Andrew David Hennes**

*Argyle High School*

**Argyle, TX**

Andrew Hennes is a junior at Argyle High School (AHS). He has a passion for genetics and molecular biology and is currently researching CRISPR-Cas9 treatment of autoimmune disease and vibrotactile feedback for transfemoral amputees. Andrew is the state champion in science, also earning his second consecutive Gold Medal in biology and a Silver Medal in chemistry as a part of his school's University Interscholastic League (UIL) science team's sixth consecutive state championship. He is an Eagle Scout in Troop 192. Andrew enjoys playing Euphonium in the Wind Ensemble and was a member of a state marching band championship. He is an avid distance runner who enjoys

volunteering through National Honor Society (NHS), Student Council, and Young Men's Service League (YMSEL).



**Allen Huang**  
*Canyon Crest Academy*  
**San Diego, CA**

Allen Huang is a sophomore attending Canyon Crest Academy in San Diego. He participates in mathematics and science competitions and is an invitee for the US National Chemistry Olympiad (USNCO) study camp this year. He is also a four-time qualifier for the American Invitational Mathematics Exam (AIME). Allen is President of his school's Chemistry Club and Science Bowl Club, where he participates in the National Science Bowl and the National Ocean Science Bowl. He has been conducting research on protein modification and activation patterns in cancer cell cytoskeleton and apoptosis. When he is not studying, he likes to hike, hang out with friends, and play the piano.



**Kartik A. Iyer**  
*International Community School*  
**Kirkland, WA**

Kartik Iyer is a senior at International Community School. He has been participating in math and science competitions since he was in elementary school. Biology is his favorite subject, so he is ecstatic at becoming one of the top 20 USABO Finalists. Kartik is a three-time American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME) qualifier, Vice President of his school's chess club, mentors middle school students to prepare them for academic competitions, and is a black belt in Taekwondo. He is a Presidential Scholar Nominee with perfect SAT and PSAT scores. In his free time, he reads fanfiction and engages in Role-playing Games (RPG). He likes to travel to new countries with his family and is fond of different cuisines.



**Mihir Khambete**  
*Cupertino High School*  
**Cupertino, CA**

Mihir Khambete is a senior at Cupertino High School. This will be his second year attending the USA Biology Olympiad National Finals. He is a fluent in Mandarin and represented the United States at the 2014 Chinese Bridge Speech Competition World Championships, hosted by the Chinese Ministry of Education in Kunming, China. He is a member of American MENSA, the Davidson Young Scholars program, and the Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY). Mihir has led his school quiz bowl team to qualify for both the Partnership for Academic Competition Excellence (PACE) and the National Academic Quiz Tournaments (NAQT) national championships in 2016 and 2017. He enjoys reading *Wikipedia* and

swimming. Next fall, he will attend MIT.



**Pranav Lalgudi**  
*Lynbrook High School*  
**San Jose, CA**

Pranav Lalgudi is a senior at Lynbrook High School in California and will be attending Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the fall. He is interested in molecular biology and plans to pursue a career in research. Pranav is honored to be a part of the Winslow Lab family, where he uses CRISPR to model cancer in mice. He enjoys playing soccer and is an avid Manchester United fan. Some of his other hobbies include making aggressive buzzes in Science Bowl, collecting stuffed microbes, and eating spicy Mexican food.



**Edward M. Lee**  
*Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA)*  
**Austin, TX**

Edward Lee is a junior at the Liberal Arts and Science Academy in Texas. He is a member of his school's Science Olympiad team and will be competing at his second Science Olympiad National Tournament in search of a national medal this year. Edward is a three-time American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME) qualifier, and he placed fourth in the 2016 Texas Music Teacher Association (TMTA) Student Affiliate Performance Contest in the piano solo competition. Aside from studying biology, Edward enjoys playing the piano, collecting coins, and practicing Tae Kwon Do.



**Neeraj Prasad**  
*Thomas Jefferson School for Science & Technology*  
**Alexandria, VA**

Neeraj is a senior at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. He attended the Center for Excellence in Education's USA Biology Olympiad (USABO) Finals at Purdue University in 2015, and the Research Science Institute at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 2016. He is a member of his school's science bowl team, which placed 2<sup>nd</sup> at the 2017 National Science Bowl. Neeraj also enjoys conducting research, exploring the epigenomes of diabetes patients, and characterizing a protein involved in neuroblastoma. He is an avid tennis player, and is Captain of his school's varsity team. Neeraj will attend MIT this fall.



**Alexander Tsao**  
*Troy High School*  
Fullerton, CA

Alexander Tsao is a junior at Troy High School in Fullerton, California. His interests include all branches of science, including computer science. He competed for the first time in the Science Olympiad National Tournament this year in the events Ecology, Anatomy and Physiology, and Microbe Mission. Alexander has also received High Honors in the US National Chemistry Olympiad and has competed in the National Science Bowl. He was an active member of his school's Navy Junior Reserves Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) marksmanship team last year. In his free time, Alexander enjoys stargazing, fixing broken home

appliances, and listening to music from the 70s and 80s.



**James Ethan Umans**  
*Capistrano Valley High School*  
Mission Viejo, CA

Jacob Umans is a graduating senior at Capistrano Valley High School and will attend Stanford University this fall. He has participated in the USA National Brain Bee and is a co-founder of the International Youth Neuroscience Association (IYNA). IYNA is an international network of high school students with a passion for the study of neuroscience dedicated to promoting neuroscience education around the world. Jacob furthered his enthusiasm for research through an internship at the Salk Institute. He plans to obtain an MD/PhD and investigate the molecular mechanisms underlying neurodegenerative disease. Outside of

neuroscience, he is an avid fan of puns and quiz bowl.



**Catherine Wang**  
*Lexington High School*  
Lexington, MA

Catherine Wang is a senior at Lexington High School in Massachusetts. She is the Captain of her National Science Bowl team, which placed First at the national competition this year, and a returning USABO Finalist from 2016. In the rare event that she is not reading a biology textbook, she dabbles in oil painting and photography in hopes that one day she will design the cover of *Nature* in addition to publishing in it. She is also well-known for her ability to produce startlingly realistic chirping noises, which has earned her the nickname "Cricket" among the scientific community. Next year, she will attend Stanford University where she plans to pursue an eclectic mix of biology, visual arts, and education.



### **Xuchen Wei**

***Carmel High School***  
**Carmel, IN**

Xuchen Wei is a junior at Carmel High School. This will be his second time as a National Finalist for the USA Biology Olympiad (USABO). He is the Founder and President of his school's Biology Club. He also serves as Captain of his school's Science Bowl team, which placed 5th in National Science Bowl this year. Xuchen is headed into his 4th year in Senate, and served this year as the Chair of Care of Share, a charity program which buys holiday gifts for low-income families, and his school's blood drive, the largest blood drive of its kind in the state. In addition, he is a member of his school's Junior Statesmen of America chapter, DECA chapter, and World Affairs Council Team.



### **Daniel Jeffrey Wu**

***Timber Creek High School***  
**Orlando, FL**

Daniel Wu is a junior at Timber Creek High School in Florida. He has qualified for and has been outsmarted by the semifinals of the United States National Physics Olympiad (USAPHO The U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad (USNCO), USABO and American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME). He is the Lincoln–Douglas (LD) Debate captain, and a nationally competitive debater, as well as a National Scholastic Gold Medalist. Daniel firmly believes in the intersectionality of all science and is interested in applications of ecological dynamics to oncology and will be an intern at the National Cancer Institute. Addicted to frustration and learning things he does not understand, he can be found reading *Wikipedia* and redundantly esoteric philosophy, or trying strange food.



### **Wenbo Wu**

***Thomas Jefferson School for Science & Technology***  
**Alexandria, VA**

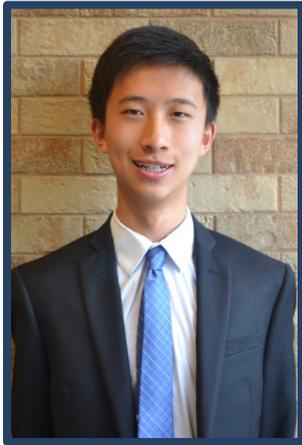
Wenbo Wu is a sophomore attending Thomas Jefferson High School for Science & Technology (TJHSST) in Virginia. At TJHSST, he enjoys mathematics and is an American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME) qualifier. He serves as Editor for his school literary magazine *Threshold*. In 2014 and 2015, he attended the National Science Bowl. As the 2015 team Co-Captain, he led his team to a 6th place win. In 2015, he also attended the National History Bowl and Quiz Bowls, where his teams placed 1st and 8th, respectively. Wenbo finds the Latin language fascinating and has earned Gold Medals for many of the *National Junior Classical League* (NJCL) Latin competitions in 2016 and 2017. When he isn't studying biology, he can be found reading, writing poetry, playing the trombone, or learning chemistry which is another one of his interests.



**Thomas Xiong**  
*Seven Lakes High School*  
**Katy, TX**

Thomas Xiong is a senior at Seven Lakes High School. He has been awarded multiple Gold Medals at the National Science Olympiad (NSO) tournament and the MIT Invitational. He is a two-time qualifier for the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME). Thomas is also an avid cellist, having served as the section leader for multiple orchestras, including the 2015-2016 Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) Philharmonic, the Seven Lakes Varsity Orchestra, and the Houston Youth Symphony (HYS). This year, Thomas ranked First among all cellists in the preliminary round of Texas All-State Auditions. He also serves as

President in a local, student-run volunteer organization *Song of Hope*, which provides musical performances to local venues. Thomas enjoys practicing cello, hanging out with friends, and studying almost anything. This fall, Thomas will be attending MIT.



**Forest Yang**  
*Monta Vista High School*  
**Cupertino, CA**

Forest Yang is a junior at Monta Vista High School in California. Outside of USABO, he likes participating in other science competitions, as an American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME) qualifier and US National Chemistry Olympiad (USNCO) Honors recipient. He also enjoys being involved in school clubs, having served as an Officer of his school's Neuroscience Club and Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) chapter. When he's not busy, Forest likes spending time outdoors—running cross country, playing basketball, riding bikes, and going camping with his Boy Scout troop. Also, he is quite fond of graphic design.