



VJAS VOICE

THE VIRGINIA JUNIOR ACADEMY
OF SCIENCE'S QUARTERLY PAPER

Winter 2023 EDITION, ISSUE 1

"ANYONE WHO
HAS NEVER MADE
A MISTAKE HAS
NEVER TRIED
ANYTHING NEW."

ALBERT EINSTEIN

2023 VJAS VIRTUAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

*Serving the World Through
Science*

The College of William & Mary
Williamsburg, VA

Student presentations will
be *fully virtual* and begin on



We look forward to the hosting our new and
returning student scientists via a virtual
symposium!

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- Page 2** - From the Director, Susan Booth
- Page 2** - Checking Your Paper, Jacob Tiller
- Page 3** - 10 Tips for Finishing Strong with Your Project, Rania Lateef
- Page 4** - Becoming a VJAS officer, Hamza Arman Lateef
- Page 4** - Virginia Environmental Endowment Scholarships, Hamza Arman Lateef

VJAS STUDENT GOVERNMENT

CO-PRESIDENTS:
HAMZA ARMAN LATEEF
LAASYA KONIDALA

• • •

VICE PRESIDENT:
CHARLOTTE CUNNINGHAM

• • •

SECRETARY:
YASH SAXENA

• • •

EDITORS IN CHIEF:
RANIA LATEEF
JACOB TILLER

• • •

COMMUNICATIONS LIAISON:
NITYA KUMAR

VJAS VOICE

2023 EDITION, ISSUE 1

FROM THE DIRECTOR

SUSAN BOOTH

On behalf of the Virginia Junior Academy of Science (VJAS), we would like to request your assistance in providing science expertise toward a state competition in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). As a judge or reader, you will judge or read remotely through a virtual judging online platform. Join us in evaluating student projects from across the state of Virginia in the comfort of your own home, office, or remote destination.

To learn more about VJAS please visit <https://vjas.org/index.html> [vjas.org]. On our homepage is a [link](#) to sign up to read and or judge student papers. You can also review previous papers if you access the [Proceedings](#).

The dates for reading will be March 3 – 29. You will read and rank the papers online. Protocols for ranking will be provided. The date for judging is May 6th, 9 AM-4 PM. You will receive the link to your papers to review (prior to judging on May 6) during the last week of April. Protocols for judging will be provided.

If you would like to serve as a Special Judge this will occur between May 7 – 14. Special judges are responsible for deciding the winners of certain awards outside of the first, second, third, etc. category awards. Please let Robin Curtis associate.directorVJAS@gmail.com know of your interest and you will be put in touch with Dr. Julia Cothron.

CHECKING YOUR PAPER

JACOB TILLER

After completing your paper, you may be tempted to upload it to the VJAS website immediately. However, you should be sure to check your paper against the published VJAS publication guidelines that will be used to vet your paper following its upload. These guidelines can be found on the VJAS website in the publicly available handbook. For example, you would want to check that you are using 1-inch margins for your paper and that you have cited all sources properly. Though it can be tempting to simply “submit and forget” about all of the more fine tuned aspects of your paper, it is key to ensure that your paper is within VJAS guidelines. The small amount of additional work it may take to review your paper can help you catch any silly errors that you may have made. Most importantly, a quick overview of the guidelines can help you ensure that your paper has a real chance at being accepted and that you have not made any glaring errors. You may also consider having others read over your paper to ensure that the writing flows smoothly and conveys the message that you intend it to. Ultimately, you worked hard on your papers so be sure to finish strong and check those guidelines!

TOP TEN TIPS FOR FINISHING STRONG WITH YOUR VJAS PROJECT RANIA LATEEF

1. It's your project, own it and be proud of it

You have worked hard all year, and you should feel a sense of pride. This will carry over as confidence in your writing and in your presentation.

2. Seek help early.

This is YOUR deadline and only you know when and how fast it is approaching. If you want others to weigh in, do so by starting early and give people time to respond and provide input.

3. Find a diverse set of mentors and helpers

Your science teacher is a great place to start. But surely they have many other students like yourself and is super busy. Consider asking your English or History teachers, or even a club sponsor if they wouldn't mind reading your paper. Their input on writing skills can be invaluable.

4. READ (many times!) the VJAS Handbook and Style Manual

Doing high quality research is important but writing a high-quality paper is equally important for success at the symposium. There's tons of helpful information within these resources.

5. Check out our student STEMinars!

This year the VJAS officers, led by Charlotte Cunningham, prepared two STEMinars aimed at helping you through the science and submission process at VJAS. Be sure to check out the recordings on our website.

6. Once the paper is submitted, relax a bit

Regardless of the outcome, you have put in a lot of effort and you deserve to feel proud and relax a bit until the list of accepted papers is released.

7. For your presentation, plan ahead

Have an outline and show it to someone who hasn't seen your project up-close. See if the flow of information makes sense to them. Use peer input as well as more experienced eyes.

8. Practice the Presentation

If possible, practice in your classroom, or as part of a club like Science National Honor Society. It will give you confidence and others will learn from your experience.

9. There are many prizes...

Look up all the awards that you may be eligible for. You don't have to place within your category to win some of these.

10. LET'S DO THIS!

You are awesome for trying, and no matter the outcome, you are a scientist. We are proud of you.

BECOMING A VJAS OFFICER

HAMZA ARMAN LATEEF

Participating in VJAS can take many forms. If scientific research is something you love, you might be interested in being a VJAS student officer too. You will see the scientific community through the lens of organizing events, marketing and publicizing opportunities, and mentoring others who are interested in science.

Student officer positions include President, Vice-President, Secretary, Editor-in-Chief and Communication Liaisons. These officers, selected from the statewide student membership of the VJAS, work with the VJAS Committee and serve under the direction of the VJAS Director, VJAS Associate Director, VJAS Committee Chair, and VJAS Committee Vice-Chair. Requirements and procedures for officer elections and appointments can be found on page 46 of the VJAS Student Handbook.

It is very important that you speak with your school sponsor and seek the nomination to be a VJAS officer from your school. To ensure diverse representation, the VJAS committee tries to pick no more than one student officer from each high school. Applications will become available after your paper is accepted for presentation. Officer candidates are expected to submit a paper to the symposium but may still run for office even if their paper is not accepted. WE look forward to seeing your officer application!

VIRGINIA ENVIRONMENTAL ENDOWMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

HAMZA ARMAN LATEEF

The Virginia Environmental Endowment (VEE), a nonprofit, independent grant-making foundation, has worked for more than four decades towards improving environmental quality, advancing environmental literacy, and partnering to establish known land trusts, conservation networks, and even a statewide mediation center. VJAS is very excited to partner with the VEE to provide two scholarships to our young scientists who are currently excelling in environmental research.

There are two scholarship opportunities to students who present a project at the VJAS annual symposium:

- The Frances & Sydney Lewis Environmental Science Scholarship
- The Henry W. MacKenzie, Jr. Environmental Scholarship

Details on eligibility criteria and application procedures for both can be found on the VJAS website and in the VJAS handbook