

WSSA Student Contest Committee Report

2024 Committee Membership

Chair: Marty Schraer (Syngenta)

Co-Chair: Darrin Dodds (Mississippi State University)

Members:

John Hinz (Bayer)

Belaji Pandian (ENKO)

Sandeep Rana (Bayer)

2025 Committee Membership

Chair: Darrin Dodds (Mississippi State University)

Co-Chair: Marty Schraer (Syngenta)

Members:

Ramawatar Yadav (University of Wyoming)

John Hinz (Bayer)

Belaji Pandian (ENKO)

Sandeep Rana (Bayer)

2024 Student Participation

Row Labels	Masters	PhD	Undergraduate	Total
SWSS 15-minute oral	27	33	1	61
WSSA SST	10	23		33
WSSA/SWSS poster	38	45	3	86
Total	75	101	4	180

- Combined Contest for the joint meeting required 105 judges to fill the required judging panels.
- Volunteerism had a very slow start, but surpassed expectations in the end.

2024 Awards:

Contest	# Sections	\$ Awarded*	Recipients
MS Posters	4	2400	12
PhD Posters	5	3000	15
MS SST	1	600	3
PhD SST	3 + final	825	6
Total	14	\$4125	36

*1st-\$300, 2nd-\$200, 3rd-\$100; SST finalist-\$75

Difficulties w/the 2024 WSSA-SWSS joint contest

- Committee's understanding of commitments made with the SWSS regarding the SST contest; remedy proposed below
- Complexity
- Redundancy of the awards; proposed remedy below (contingency plans for joint meetings)
- Varied AV setup between initial round and final round
 - Initial round had cordless & podium microphones
 - Final round only had the podium microphone
- Space in the poster room is ALWAYS an issue
- Volunteering at registration, remedy below
 - Forgotten about

Planned Activities for 2025

- Return judge's feedback to the students by March 15
- Committee Workshop
- Revamp score sheets
- Improve process of receiving scores and tabulation of final rankings
- SST Contest format
 - keep the 5-minute schedule, but allow 4 minutes for student presentation with 1 minute for transition

- Add time component to evaluation of the presentation.
- Tweak the final round.
 - At a minimum require finalist to present a different data set/presentation
 - Come to the meeting with another presentation.
 - Longer format for the final round
 - Impromptu final round
- Poster Contest Format:
 - Add student interaction back into the evaluation; requested by several judges.
 - Time: odd vs even, time of day
 - Require digital submission of posters; requested by several judges to ease time commitment of judging.
- Formalize MOP for the committee. (work with Lindquist)
- Create roadmap for developing the student contest.
 - Define steps to be taken with a “schedule of events” with assigned responsibilities for each step.
 - Standardize documents used for each student contest.
 - Define a contingency plan for joint meetings.
 - Keep the society contests separate (easy button).
 - Joint contests, but allow students to compete in multiple contests (greater complexity and large volunteer requirement).

Registration

- Better process this year
 - No dual enrolled student issues
- Request that a “University” or affiliation component be required at registration.
- Better utilization of the judge volunteering at registration; component of committee roadmap

Requests for BOD action

- Potential funding for committee workshop (action later with better proposal or defined need)
- Ex-officio representation on the BOD