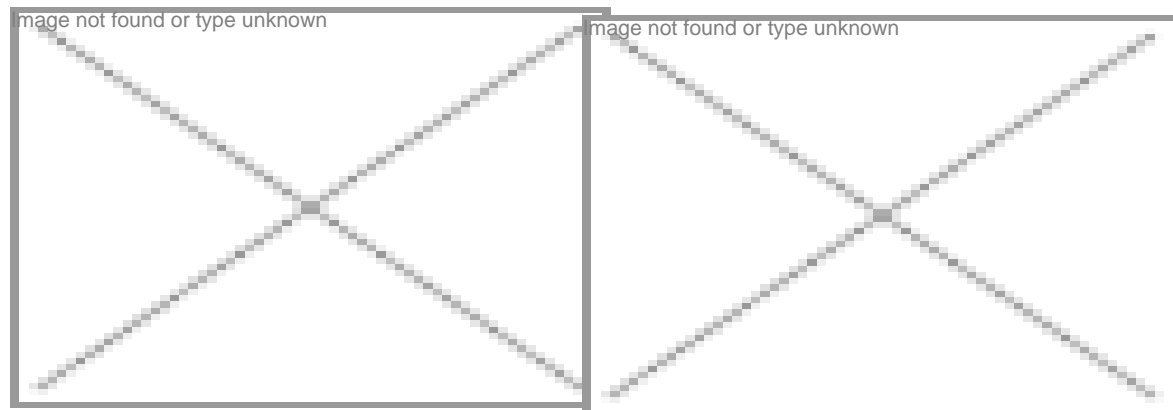


Students â€™Voiceâ€™ support for biotech

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1. Inaugurating the â€™Voice for BTâ€™ public speaking contest is Col.(Hon.) Fr Dr Thomas C Mathew, vice chancellor, Christ University. Also seen in picture (L-R), Ms Nandita Chandavarkar, director (Operations), ABLE; Mr Narayanan Suresh, group editor, BioSpectrum; Mr G S Krishnan, regional president, Novozymes South Asia

2. Deserving winner Ms Namrata Shukla from Christ University gets the prize from Mr Krishnan

3. Winners, participants, judges and organizers in the â€™Voice for BTâ€™ public speaking contest

At a time when the biotech industry is facing serious opposition from civil society groups over transgenic crops and mishandled clinical trials, overwhelming support came to its from its future generation of students. The occasion was the first ever â€™Voice for BTâ€™ public speaking contest organized by Novozymes South Asia in collaboration with the Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE), BioSpectrum and

Christ University in Bangalore on September 21, 2012.

In all, 24 students pursuing biotech courses in 24 science and engineering colleges across the state of Karnataka assembled at the Christ University for the final round of speaking passionately on topics such as the role of biotechnology in 'food security', 'sustainable biofuel' and 'affordable healthcare for all'. At the end of a pulsating final round, Ms Namrata Shukla from Christ University emerged the deserving winner for her passionate advocacy for biotech industry. Ms Vaishnavi A D from Sir M Visvesvaraya Institute of Technology (first runner-up) and Ms Niharika Raj Kamat from Bapuji Institute of Engineering and Technology (second runner-up) were the other winners. The first three winners of the contest were awarded with cash prizes and internships at Novozymes R&D facility in Bangalore. All the participants at the event were given a medallion and a participation certificate from Novozymes.

The chief guests for the occasion were Col.(Hon.) Fr Dr Thomas C Mathew, vice chancellor, Christ University, Mr Narayanan Suresh, group editor, BioSpectrum and Ms Nandita Chandavarkar, director (Operations), ABLE.

Opportunities in biotechnology

Inaugurating the event, Mr GS Krishnan, regional president, Novozymes South Asia said, "While biotechnology is still in its nascent stage in India, there are tremendous opportunities for growth of this segment in the country. To capitalize on these potentials we need to propagate biotechnological solutions as sustainable alternatives to reduce energy consumption, support food security, create affordable healthcare products and reduce environmental pollution. This can be achieved only by encouraging the budding talents at a time when there is lot of uncertainty in the minds of the young biotech students about their future in this segment. The intercollegiate public speaking contest "voice for BT" serves as a platform for the students to voice their views by unlocking their creativity."

In his key note address, Col.(Hon.) Fr Dr Thomas C Mathew, vice chancellor, Christ University said, "I congratulate Novozymes for conducting this event and creating a connect with the young talent pool in India. I feel industry should connect with the institutions and students more often, as they are the future of the country and this kind of platform and association will help to provide the young generation an opportunity to enhance their knowledge and build up their careers in the competitive job market."

The panel of judges included Dr Sudhir Nambiar, managing director, AstraZeneca, Mr Divakar Rao, member, Vision Group on Biotechnology and Karnataka Biofuel Development Board, Dr Steffen Danielsen, head, R&D, Novozymes India and Mr Narayanan Suresh.

Narayanan Suresh