



85 Prescott Street
Worcester, MA 01605-2610

(508) 831-5859
FAX: (508) 831-5880

TO: Area News Media
FROM: Michael Barney,
Director, Massachusetts Academy of Math and Science
RE: Press Release for Immediate Publication

Mass Academy of Math and Science Senior meets President Obama

Aarushi Pendharkar, a Senior at the Mass Academy of Math and Science, was invited to attend the White House Frontiers Conference in Pittsburgh, PA, co-hosted by the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University on Oct. 13, 2016, to discuss her research and meet President Obama. The focus of the conference was U.S. capacity in science, technology, and innovation challenges as well as the goals that will continue to shape the 21st century and beyond.

Aarushi was sponsored by the Society for Science & the Public (SSP), the organization that runs the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, at which Aarushi won a second place grand award in her category of Biomedical and Health Sciences and a second place special award from the American Physiological Society in May 2016. SSP nominated Aarushi and submitted her credentials and research abstract to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. The final selection of seven students nationwide from the group nominated by SSP was made by the White House.

Aarushi's research was titled Wound Healing and Tissue Regeneration Through the Powers of Light and Curcumin. If exposed to low levels of near infrared light and curcumin, does wound healing and tissue repair in *Girardia tigrina* (brown planaria) occur at a faster rate, as measured by blastema formation, growth, and regeneration?

At the conference, Aarushi met and connected with dignitaries including Dr. Subra Suresh, the President of Carnegie Mellon University; Dr. France Cordova, the director of the National Science Foundation; George Whitesides, the CEO of Virgin Galactic and James Park, the CEO of Fitbit. She had a wonderful time sitting in the third row of the audience, listening to President Obama speak. To top it all, she introduced herself to President Obama and shook his hand.

To see more information about the White House Frontiers Conference, go to <http://www.frontiersconference.org/>



About Mass Academy

Mass Academy is a public, co-educational school of excellence that enrolls about 100 academically accelerated 11th and 12th graders. Math and science are emphasized within a comprehensive, interactive academic program. The rigor of the junior year classes exceeds high school honors and AP, emphasizing depth over breadth, engaging students in project-based learning, and more than 1,100 hours of instruction. Seniors complete a full year of college, enrolling in classes at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, thus making the Academy the only public school in Massachusetts whose students attend a private university full time as seniors in high school. The Academy is a collaborative effort among the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and the high schools of Massachusetts.

www.massacademy.org

<https://www.facebook.com/MassAcademyofMathandScience/timeline>

About Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Founded in 1865 in Worcester, Mass., WPI is one of the nation's first engineering and technology universities. Its 14 academic departments offer more than 50 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in science, engineering, technology, business, the social sciences, and the humanities and arts, leading to bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. WPI's talented faculty work with students on interdisciplinary research that seeks solutions to important and socially relevant problems in fields as diverse as the life sciences and bioengineering, energy, information security, materials processing, and robotics. Students also have the opportunity to make a difference to communities and organizations around the world through the university's innovative Global Projects Program. There are more than 40 WPI project centers throughout North America and Central America, Africa, Australia, Asia, and Europe.