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**SCIENCE PROGRAM TARGETING UNDERSERVED
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS
ACCEPTED FOR NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION BY
AMERICAN PUBLIC TELEVISION (APT)**

“Science Mission 101” premieres on WQED-TV Thursday, November 12 at 8 p.m.

PITTSBURGH, Pennsylvania— In the search for America’s next generation of scientists, WQED Multimedia in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh has produced *Science Mission 101*, an educational, competitive reality television program wherein two teams of Pittsburgh-area high school students compete to unravel scientific mysteries. Aimed at reaching underserved middle school students and accepted for national distribution by APT, the fast-paced half-hour pilot of *Science Mission 101* will **premiere Thursday, November 12, 2009 at 8 p.m. on WQED-TV.**

In the pilot episode, host Mike Lee challenges *Team Awesome* and *Team Dominate* to investigate whether amoebae like those found in our digestive systems prefer to eat specific types of bacteria and if that preference relates to the fact that only certain bacteria make people sick. The students expose an amoeba to different strains of the bacterium *Salmonella*—which is found in raw or undercooked food—to determine if it prefers to eat one strain over the other. Students perform their work in laboratories within Pitt’s Department of Biological Sciences and on the Pitt Mobile Science Lab, a traveling

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laboratory outfitted with current high-end equipment used to perform scientific investigations.

Team Awesome includes team leader Olivia Iannone, 14, of South Park High School; Jason Chen, 16, of North Allegheny High School; and Aliya Taylor, 16, of Riverview High School. *Team Dominate* is led by Dominic Stokes, 16, of Valley High School, who is joined by Pietra Bruni, 16, of Seton La Salle High School, and Guthrie Gintzler, 16, of Taylor Allderdice High School.

The teams present their findings to judges from Pitt's Department of Biological Sciences and are evaluated based on cooperation, creativity, interpretation of experimental data, presentation, and scientific thought. The judges are Alison Slinsky Legg, PhD, Mobile Science Lab Director and Director of Outreach Programs for the Department of Biological Sciences; Graham F. Hatfull, PhD, Eberly Family Professor and HHMI Professor and Chair of the department; and Kristen Butela, a graduate student in the lab of Pitt biological sciences professor Jeffrey Lawrence.

Science Mission 101 will encore on Sunday, November 15 at Noon and 7:30 p.m. and Monday, November 16 at 4:30 p.m. on WQED-TV. Additional resources for students and teachers will be available by the show's premiere at www.sciencemission101.com. Funding to produce the pilot for *Science Mission 101* was provided by the PA Department of Education through the Pennsylvania Public Television Network (PPTN,) PPG Industries Foundation and The University of Pittsburgh.

WQED Pittsburgh, honored with the 2007 and 2006 Mid-Atlantic Emmy® Award for Station Excellence, was founded in 1954 as the nation's first community-supported broadcaster. WQED creates, produces and distributes quality programs, products and services to engage, inform, educate and entertain the public within its community and around the world. WQED Pittsburgh is one of the first broadcasters in the country to be fully high-definition (HD) in its studio and field production capabilities. It is the parent company of WQED-TV (PBS); WQED: The Neighborhood Channel; WQED: The Create Channel; WQEX-TV (A ShopNBC affiliate); Classical WQED-FM 89.3/Pittsburgh; Classical WQED-FM 89.7/Johnstown; local and national television and radio productions; WQED Interactive (www.wqed.org); and The WQED Education Department.

Pitt's Biological Sciences Outreach Program has supported local K-12 education for the past fifteen years, providing professional teacher training workshops, hands-on science experiments for K-12 students, and an outreach education associate's degree program that introduces graduate and undergraduate biology students to K-12 teaching (<http://www.pitt.edu/~biology>). Since 1995, Pitt has supplied high school science teachers with "Pitt Kits" that contain supplies for them to create and implement inquiry-based modules to teach their students throughout the year; the program has reached more than 33,000 students within a 50-mile radius of the University.

The Pitt Mobile Science Lab is a self-contained, fully equipped, traveling laboratory primarily used for the outreach programs in the Department of Biological Sciences. The 70-foot tractor-trailer was purchased in 2008 through a National Institutes of Health Clinical and Translational Science Award. It is sponsored by Pitt's Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute (CTSI) and through the [Science Education Partnership Awards](#) (SEPA) to the Department of Biological Sciences. Collaborative partners include the Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse, the Lyceum Group, Thermo Fisher Scientific, and Pittsburgh Tissue Engineering Initiative.

Established in 1951, the **PPG Industries Foundation** demonstrates the values of PPG Industries by enhancing the quality of life in communities where the company has a presence. Interests of the foundation, in order of priority, are education, human services, culture and arts, and civic and community affairs. PPG also supports charitable causes by encouraging employee volunteerism and executives' involvement with nonprofit organizations.

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