

# Savannah Science Seminar

*Student Handbook*



# Savannah Science Seminar

Founded in 1959, the Savannah Science Seminar seeks to promote an understanding and appreciation for science, engineering and technology through informative, participatory presentations to qualified 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in Savannah, Chatham, Bryan and Effingham Counties.

In the spring of each year, 10<sup>th</sup> grade students interested in joining the Seminar are invited to take a science aptitude test. Students meeting the predetermined testing criteria are then invited to apply for admission to the Seminar. Students are evaluated on the basis of essay questions used to gauge their involvement and interest in the sciences, and on teacher recommendations. Students are selected for membership for the following academic year.

Membership in the Seminar is limited to a maximum of 36 students. By involving students from as many different local high schools as possible, members get to meet and team with other students with similar interests and abilities.

The Savannah Science Seminar members meet twice a month during the academic year. During these meetings, students meet active local professionals from various scientific fields, and learn more about the educational requirements, job opportunities and scope of activities involved in choosing science as a career. Students also work hands-on (HOWsession) with experiments and projects that enhance the lecture format, allowing them to experience first hand the problem-solving methods and creativity necessary to be a successful engineer or scientist.

## Program Leadership

The Savannah Science Seminar is generously supported and funded through the efforts of its Board of Directors. Limited to a maximum of fifteen members, the Board of Directors selects and directs all seminar activities, and is comprised of individuals from local industry and educational institutions who wish to actively promote science, engineering, and technology at the secondary school level.

In order to sustain operations and expand the program's reach, the Savannah Science Seminar continues to explore new funding sources from corporate and private supporters of education and the sciences. Private donations are welcomed.

## Communication and Social Networking

The Savannah Science Seminar has its own website both to inform the general public, and to communicate with student members. For a complete and up-to-date schedule, points standings, as well as contact information for all students and board members, go to <http://www.savsciencesem.org>.

Email is the preferred communication method for the Board to contact students regarding any changes to the schedule or reminders. Our email is [savscisem@gmail.com](mailto:savscisem@gmail.com).

If you have a Facebook account, we ask that you join the Savannah Science Seminar group to connect with student members past and present as well as Board Members and science leaders in the community. The Seminar will post updates and the calendar on Facebook. You can join discussions, share pictures from Seminars, and find information on upcoming events.

## Seminar Format

Seminar members meet at least twice a month (sometimes three) during the academic year and most often are on Monday evenings 7-9pm.

Each month is devoted to a particular discipline within science and engineering, such as biology, chemistry, physics, civil engineering, computer engineering, medicine, etc. These monthly seminars are divided into two sessions: a lecture and a HOWsession (Hands On Workshop).

**Lecture session:** During the lecture session, students meet with professionals from within the given discipline and learn about the educational requirements and career options of the field. After a broad overview of the discipline, the presenter will engage the students in specific, intensive instruction in scientific theories and principles as they relate to a particular area of expertise.

**HOWsession:** Using the knowledge gained in the lecture session, teams of students will work with the presenter on one or more hands-on projects or experiments. The teams will compete with one another against a series of criteria, with recognition given to the top two teams.

**Closing session:** At the end of the academic year, seminar members will attend a closing competitive event based upon the April seminar. This event is typically on a Saturday in May and will take up most of the day and family and friends are invited. This will be the final opportunity for students to earn points. Awards and certificates will be presented.

## Seminar Scoring System

Students will be awarded points based on their participation in the Savannah Science Seminar. At the end of the year, the three students with the highest point totals will be awarded Certificates of Completion and cash prizes.

The scoring system is as follows:

### Attendance

Students will receive **2 points** for attending each scheduled session.

### HOWsession

Students will be divided into teams for lab activities that have various competitive categories. New teams will be assigned for each HOWsession.

- Members of the 1st place team in each category will be awarded **10 points**.
- Members of the 2nd place team in each category will be awarded **7 points**.
- Members of the 3rd place team in each category will be awarded **4 points**.

## Extra Credit

Students can earn extra credit points in several ways:

### ***Bringing a science teacher to a session***

**5 extra points** will be awarded to a student bringing their science teacher to a lecture or HOWsession. Extra points will not be allotted to students bringing more than one teacher at a time.

### ***Bringing a parent or other adult to a session***

**5 extra points** will be awarded to a student bringing a parent or other adult (over 21 years of age) to a lecture or HOWsession. Extra points will not be allotted to students bringing more than one adult at a time.

## Sign-Ins

Students are expected to sign in at each session with their parent or teacher. If a student or parent fails to sign in, they will receive no points. The sign in sheet is the final say in whether or not a student receives points for that particular session.

**Students more than 15 minutes late will receive only 1 point for a session.**

### ***Special Events***

From time to time, the board may announce special events, lectures, or seminars taking place in the Savannah area. Students who attend the announced event will be awarded **up to 10 extra points**.

## Tracking Points

Seminar members can view their current point standings via a link on the WEBSITE under the AWARDS menu. If at any time a member feels there is an error in their point standings, it is *their* responsibility to notify the Chairperson or the board host of the session in question.

The Savannah Science Seminar website, [www.savsciencesem.org](http://www.savsciencesem.org), has contact email addresses and phone numbers of all board members and session hosts. If a student is running late or lost just prior to a session the student needs to contact the board member via call or text.

## Student Membership

### Selection Process

In the spring of each academic year, 10<sup>th</sup> grade students from Chatham, Bryan and Effingham Counties (public, private, homeschool) interested in joining the Seminar are invited to take a science aptitude test. Students scoring within the qualifying percentile range, as determined by the Board of Directors, are then invited to apply for admission to the Seminar. Students are then evaluated on the basis of essay questions used to gauge their involvement and interest in the sciences, and on teacher recommendations. Students are selected for membership for the following academic year. In addition, the winner(s) of the GTS Regional Science and Engineering Fair are invited to join the Savannah Science Seminar program for the following school year. Membership in the Seminar is limited to approximately 32 students.

The Savannah Science Seminar strives to include students from all schools, private and public, in Chatham, Bryan and Effingham Counties. The Savannah Science Seminar is committed to selecting the best, brightest, and most dedicated students based on merit, and independent of gender, race, Savannah Science Seminar Student Handbook

religion, or creed.

## Expectations of Student Members

The Savannah Science Seminar is a fun and challenging organization. As the top science students in the Savannah, Chatham, Bryan and Effingham Counties, members are held to very high standards of participation.

### ***Attendance***

Members are expected to attend every session. If a student will not be present at a session, it is the student's responsibility to contact the organization ***prior to the meeting and in any event no later than the following day*** to explain their absence. The student should contact via email, either the Savannah Science Seminar [Chairperson](#) or the board host of the session the student will miss. The Savannah Science Seminar website, [www.savsciencesem.org](http://www.savsciencesem.org), has the contact information of all board members and session hosts. **A maximum of two excused absences will be permitted during the program year. A third absence results in dismissal from program. There is no appeal to this process.**

### ***Tardiness***

Because the Savannah Science Seminar Board relies heavily on the preparation, time commitment, and knowledge base of our surrounding industry seminar presenters, it is strongly recommended that students be at the Lecture and/or HOWsession *at least 15 minutes* before the scheduled start to ensure that the seminars can begin on time. If a student is late to a seminar start time, they may be penalized points per instance. See points system above. Habitual tardiness is not accepted and is cause for program dismissal.

### ***Preparation***

To make the most of the time allotted for each session, students may be given a list of concepts and/or terms with which to familiarize themselves before the session date. The lecturers and HOWsession directors will be presenting at an advanced level, and the failure of a student to prepare for a session may hinder their level of participation.

### ***Courtesy***

Seminar members will be treated like adults, and as such are expected to conduct themselves like adults. Professional courtesy should be extended to all involved in the seminars, including lecturers, lab directors and other students. Students are expected to participate and give lecturers their full attention. Therefore, cell phones should be turned off and put away during seminars as well as food. Students should not wander off from a seminar and not leave until the seminar has officially ended. Please use proper etiquette on the facebook page.