

7 December 2020

FCC NTX Update: Honor Stmt change, A message to inspire

All:

Quick update – the Honor Statement is scheduled for this month. However, HQ has decided to change the system to require an online document (like the media waiver). So until the system is updated to handle the online form, we will postpone the Honor Statement requirement. I'll let you know as soon as I do.

Lastly, I wanted to pass along this story for a few years ago. Things are tough this year, I know. Six years ago, our NTX team had a very unpleasant surprise after they got to DC for the finals. The freight company delivering the models got stuck in a snowstorm and the team had no model in DC – at least for the first 2 days of the competition (which included the special awards judging). The kids persevered (while the adults were freaking out) and what they came up with (in just a few hours with the resources available at the hotel) to show the judges was truly inspiring. Hopefully this story will help as we move into what I anticipate are the last months of this pandemic situation. Pictures attached of the team and model at NTX and at DC.

In the words of the Engineer-Mentor:

North Texas team Eisenhower made it to the Future City Nationals in 2014, but sadly our beautiful model, along with eight others, was held up in a snowstorm. We called it our "Apollo 13" moment—we knew that doing something, presenting something, would garner more points than just making excuses about what might have been and giving up.

So in a short six hours, the 3 students created a mock up of what their model looked like, without all the fine details, but one that communicated the concepts of their solution. And, to their amazement, the judges loved it, some even thought it was their actual model!

I still chuckle that Eisenhower won Best Model at Nationals for their real model which finally came in, but on the website, the mock up is the official photo, included below.

I learned that year to not underestimate the students and what they would do in a crunch when their hearts were in it. I loved that we connected with the real life problems faced by Apollo 13, how we approached problem solving with a can do and even a must do attitude, how we survived and even thrived in that bonding moment.

My strategy this year, faced with so many changes and tight timelines, is to follow an iterative methodology, to always have something to turn in, as we did with the Eisenhower mock up. We must deliver something to the judges to score: a drawing, a mock up, anything that communicates the concepts and solutions the students have developed, and it doesn't have to be pretty. For the model, what it communicates has always been more important than how it looks. What a great lesson for middle school students!

As a consolation, some students may still work on the model after the slideshow is turned in, if we can spare them—they will find their efforts are shown in the presentation video ;)

Best Wishes to all our North Texas teams!
Mary Jo Marvin
Future City Mentor



Eisenhower model at NTX Regional



Eisenhower mockup in Washington DC