Announcing Dr. Elizabeth Mulkerrin as Science Olympiad’s New Executive Director

Science Olympiad is proud to announce Dr. Elizabeth Mulkerrin as the new Executive Director of Science Olympiad, starting November 1, 2023. Elizabeth will work closely with current CEO Jenny Kopach, who will move to full-time President of the Science Olympiad USA Foundation on June 1, 2024. Elizabeth has a long history with Science Olympiad, serving on the National Science Olympiad Advisory Committee, the Nebraska Science Olympiad Executive Board, and the Committee for the 2015 Science Olympiad National Tournament at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. She has become a leading voice in the science education and informal science space, with a stellar career spanning several appointments including 23 years at Omaha’s Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium as Vice President of Education, President of the National Science Teaching Association (NSTA) and President of the National Science Education Leadership Association (NSELA).

“We are thrilled that Elizabeth is joining the Science Olympiad team in its 40th Anniversary year,” said Dr. Jon Pedersen, Chair of the Science Olympiad Executive Board and Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences at Oklahoma State University. “Her commitment to the student and teacher experience will bring Science Olympiad to the next level.”

Elizabeth is the co-founder of the Omaha STEM Ecosystem, a grassroots workforce organization that brings business and education together, holds an Executive Leadership Development Certificate from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), and is active with the Association of Science and Technology Centers (ASTC). She has served in leadership roles for the Nebraska Junior Academy of Science; the Nebraska Next Generation Science Standards Review Committee; the Nebraska Association of Science Teachers; the Department of Education Math Science Partnership Board; and the Nebraska Building a Presence for Science/Science Matters Advisory Board. She has received numerous honors from both formal and informal education groups, including the AZA Innovative New Exhibit Award; the NSTA Distinguished Informal Science Educator Award; the University of Nebraska Distinguishing Alumni Promising Professional Award; the Nebraska Academy of Science Friends of Science Award; the Nebraska Association of Teachers of Science Business Partner “Catalyst” Award; the Phi Delta Kappan “Outstanding Service to Education” Award; and the Nebraska Career Education “Outstanding Business/Industry Partnership” Award.

Currently, as an adjunct professor at the University of Nebraska Omaha, she teaches a graduate course in science education and an administrative leadership course. Elizabeth has also published works on a myriad of topics including STEM careers, job shadowing, professional learning, and collaborative initiatives between informal and formal education. She received her master’s and PhD degrees from the University of Nebraska Omaha, and her undergraduate degree from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Previous to the Omaha Zoo and Aquarium, she taught high school biology and zoology for six years in Omaha Public Schools.

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