



# Preparation Meeting

## Oral Exam/Interview Briefing for 2011 Candidates

Vietnam Education Foundation  
June 2010

# Introductions



## VEF Team

- **From U.S. headquarters, Washington, D.C.:**
  - Dr. Lynne McNamara, Executive Director
  - Ms. Liz Dugan, Member, VEF Board of Directors
  - Ms. Sandarshi Gunawardena, Program Officer
- **From Hanoi, Vietnam, Field office:**
  - Dr. Phuong Nguyen, Country Director
  - Ms. Binh Dang, Program Manager
  - Ms. Hanh Bui, Program Assistant
  - Ms. Mai Nguyen, Program Assistant
  - Ms. Que Nguyen, Administrative Assistant and Assistant to Country Director

# Introductions: VEF Fellows



## VEF Fellows of Cohort 2010 from Ho Chi Minh City

1. **Ms. Mai Tran – Ph.D. Fellow at University of Pennsylvania**
2. **Mr. Tam Tran – Ph.D. Fellow at University of Pennsylvania**

# Introductions: VEF Fellows



## VEF Fellows of Cohort 2010 from Hanoi

1. **Ms. Van Nghiem – MSPH Fellow at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**
2. **Ms. Hang Nguyen – Ph.D. Fellow at University of Washington**

# Welcome to VEF!



- **Purpose of today's meeting**
  - To explain the VEF selection process
  - To prepare you for the upcoming oral exam/interview and answer your questions
  - To give you a chance to interact with, and learn from, the experience of our current Fellows
  - To collect your documents

# VEF Cohort 2011 Selection Process



- **ROUND 1: Qualification screening. Done**
  - Out of 290 registrants, 92 submitted applications and 90 of these were eligible for the Technical Review.
  
- **ROUND 2: Technical Review. Done**
  - GRE score of 1050 and above – guarantee to sit for the oral exam/interview
  - Review of scientific content of applications
  
- **ROUND 3: Oral Exam/Interview. To be done**
  - Oral exams/interviews of 80 finalists (VEF) by expert panels of U.S. professors
    - Hanoi: August 8, 9 and 10 (morning) 2010
    - Ho Chi Minh City: August 11 - 12, 2010

# VEF Cohort 2011

## Oral Exam/Interview



- Conducted by **11** American professors and scientists

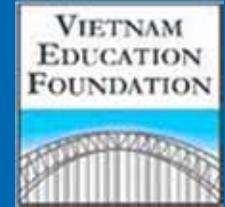
**DO NOT CONTACT U.S. INTERVIEWERS**

**DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY.**

**This will lead to disqualification.**

- Individual oral exam/interview format:
  - Panel of 2 U.S. scientists/professors selected by U.S. National Academies
  - Notes taken by 1 native English speaker

# VEF Cohort 2011 Oral Exam (cont.)



- **Oral exam session:** up to 45 minutes of Q&A
- **Wide-ranging questions** on your personal and professional background and knowledge of, and experience with, research
- **Problem-solving exercises** might be included. You may be asked to use the white board.
- **English** is the only language.
- After you leave the room, panel prepares **internal evaluation** and makes **unanimous decision**.
- Selection **recommendations** submitted to VEF.
- **Final nominees** announced by early September.

**ARE YOU THE WINNER?**

# YOU!

## The Perfect Candidate!



- Accomplishments – **Confirmed!**
- Intellectual capabilities – **Confirmed!**
- Communication – **Important!**
- Persuasive Skills – **Important!**

You are GREAT !



# The Winning Formula



- Know what the interviewers are looking for: Future Scientific Contributor and Leader for Vietnam
- Believe in yourself. Be positive. Smile.
- Dress in business attire. (No jeans or tennis shoes)
- Speak precisely. Organize your ideas, i.e. using A,B,C and 1, 2, 3.
- Tell the truth. Don't make up answers.
- Look at their eyes. Sit up straight. Breathe slowly, calmly, and confidently.





# Communication techniques

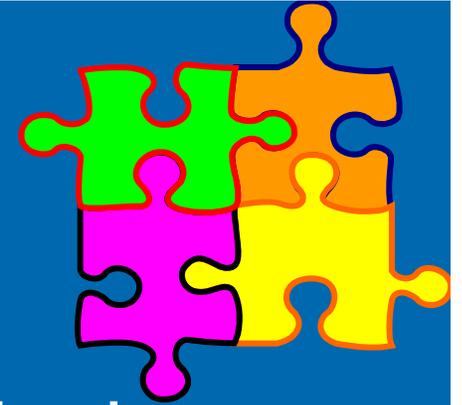
- Can you please repeat the question?
- Can you restate your question?
  - OK, then you mean....
  - Ah, yes, if I understand you correctly, you are asking about....
- May I show you on the white board?
- Well, I don't know about that particular aspect, but I do know about ....
- Hmm, let me think...



# Pro n u n c i a t i o n

- Speak slowly and clearly = ENUNCIATE
- Say the end sounds and double, triple consonants:
  - 1: academic - break - life - helpful – Vietnam - section - group - studies - south
  - 2: field - built - working - student - cohort - health - lunch - fist - fits – science - established
  - 3: organisms - terms - comments

# IMPORTANT



- **Before you leave home---**
  - **Be clean! Take a bath. Comb your hair. Clean/brush your teeth. Clean your nails, etc. etc.**
- **Come to the exam site 45 minutes early to prepare yourself.**
- **Review your own Statement of Purpose beforehand.**
- **Know about the U.S. universities and professors you have named in your application.**
- **Bring your own publications or research documents only to show as examples of your work, not to read from them.**
- **Greet the interviewers. Use a firm handshake. Smile confidently.**
- **Say “Thank You” at the end.**

# FOR UPDATES from VEF



- Visit the VEF website everyday.
- Keep your email inbox open and available to receive messages. Check your bulk/junk mailbox.
- Check your email daily and respond promptly.
- If needed, email VEF ([vef2011@vef.gov](mailto:vef2011@vef.gov)) or call VEF: 04 3936 3670





# Q & A



# Last Year's Oral Exam Experience

## 2010 Fellows - HCMC



1. **Ms. Mai Tran – Ph.D. Fellow at University of Pennsylvania**
2. **Mr. Tam Tran – Ph.D. Fellow at University of Pennsylvania**

# Last Year's Oral Exam Experience

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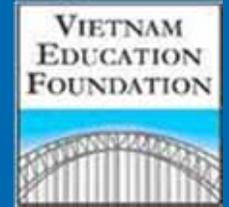


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# Administration



- **Review and Collection of your documents**
- **Reimbursement of GRE test fees for candidates with GRE score of 1100 & higher**
  - **Only for test date later than August 2009**

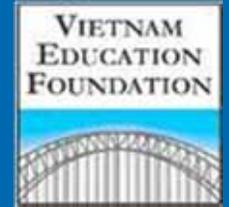


# Instructions

1. Follow the sequence on the check-list to organize your documents for submission to VEF.
2. You must submit SIX identical sets of documents (one notarized set plus five copies of the notarized set.)
3. All pages must be in white A4 size. No stapled sheets and envelopes will be accepted.
4. Use a black metal paper clip to hold each set together.
5. The VEF staff will check for authenticity of the documents. Any falsehood will disqualify you from the VEF Fellowship competition forever.
6. All submitted documents will become the possession of VEF and will NOT be returned to you.

# Check List

## 1 original + 5 copies



1. VEF online application
2. Notarized, English translation of transcripts and diplomas from your undergraduate studies.
3. Notarized, English translation of transcripts and diplomas from your graduate studies (if any).
4. Your TOEFL score report. (OK to submit all copies)
5. Your GRE score report. (OK to submit all copies)
6. Three letters of recommendation in English. Please do not keep letters of recommendation in sealed envelopes.
7. Notarized, English translation of awards and/or academic certificates (if any).
8. Do you have 6 sets total, with all pages in white, A4 size?



**WE WISH YOU THE BEST!**

**THANK YOU!**