The Canadian Association of Chemical Distributors (CACD) and the You Be The Chemist (YBTC) Canada in partnership with Imperial Oil successfully conducted the first Western Canada Regional You Be The Chemist Challenge in Edmonton, Alberta on November 12, 2013. Held at CCIS at the University of Alberta and hosted by Dr. Roy Jensen, the Challenge saw 15 students from the Edmonton Public and Catholic school boards and Elk Island Public and Catholic school boards compete in this interactive and multi-round academic competition.

The University doors opened at 8:00 a.m. for registration, student orientation and breakfast sponsored by Sylvite Industrial Chemicals. The event was supported by over 45 attendees, including parents and chaperones, school board representatives, media persons and volunteers from CACD, Imperial Oil and the University. The competition was overseen by a panel of 3 esteemed judges, comprised of Steven LePoole, Past Chairman of CACD and Executive Chairman of Di-Corp, Krista Donlevy of Imperial Oil, and Julie Cantes of Quadra Chemicals. Throughout the competition breaks, the student participants were treated to live YBTC experiments conducted by Dr. Roy Jensen.

After 4 rounds of exhilarating competition, the semi-final round saw 5 students complete for the top 2 spots. Our victors were finally announced – the winner in 1st place was Ethan Fortin of McKernan School and the runner-up was Nina Yang of Grandview Heights Junior High School. Both students were awarded with a medal, monetary prize as well as a Chemistry-to-go Kit for their school. No one went away empty-handed though, all participants received a YBTC Challenge Canada polo shirt and a gift bag filled with goodies. After the winners were announced, attendees were treated to a lunch sponsored by Quadra Chemicals Ltd.

The Challenge was am example of academic excellence and community engagement. The Challenge was able to excite students with Chemistry and showcase career opportunities available in the chemical industry by marrying together an academic competition and representation from volunteers within the chemical industry. The evolution of chemistry education was illustrated through the university level experiments along with the YBTC demonstrations. Based on the feedback received, the perception of the chemical industry and good chemistry was positively affected. Overall, the event was a huge success made possible by a group of passionate and dedicated volunteers, bright and enthusiastic students, and a collective community of education and leaders.

Thank you to everyone who supported the event and assisted in Bringing Chemistry to the Classroom.