



Three Teams from USA and Canada to Compete in the Fourteenth International Linguistics Olympiad in Mysore, India

July 18, 2016

The Competition

Selected by the North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad (NACLO), two USA teams and one Canadian team are to compete in the 14th International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) in Mysore, India from July 25 to July 29. Currently, more than 40 teams from a total of 31 countries have been registered to participate.

The competition will be split into two sections: an individual round, structured similarly to the NACLO qualifying contests, and a team round, which will test the ability of a team to collaborate on one extremely challenging problem. Examples of past team round problems have involved topics ranging from the analysis of Sanskrit poetry to the translation of Vietnamese passages and Mongolian dictionaries.

The IOL is held in a different country each year. Last year, the IOL was held in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. The individual contest featured problems in Nahuatl, Arammba, Beslenei, Soundex, Wambaya, and Somali, while the team contest covered Northern Sotho, a South African language. The USA and Canadian teams excelled in both rounds of the competition: Team USA Red took home three gold medals and had the highest average score in the individual round, with Team USA Blue in third place. Team USA Red also placed 2nd in the team contest.

The Teams

Participants for the USA and Canada teams are selected based on their performance in the invitational round of NACLO 2016, which was held on March 10, 2016. 167 students competed in the invitational round, of which the top performers were selected to this year's teams.

Laurestine Bradford of Seattle, Washington, James Wedgwood of Seattle, Washington, Erik Metz of Ellicott City, Maryland, and Shuheng “Nelson” Niu of Cupertino, California, the top four performers in NACLO, will compete on Team USA Red.

Margarita Misirpashayeva of West Windsor, New Jersey, Wyatt Reeves of Fort Worth, Texas, Jack LaFleur of Washington, DC, and Siye “Annie” Zhu of Andover, Massachusetts will compete on Team USA Blue, the second USA team.

The top four Canadian contestants from the invitational round, Kevin Sun, Minh-Tam Nguyen, Lawrence Pang, and James Hogan, all of Ontario, will compete on Team Canada.

Team Canada is coached by Heather Newell from the University of Quebec in Montreal. The two US teams are coached by Aleka Blackwell of Middle Tennessee State University and Dragomir Radev of the University of Michigan.

What is NACLO

NACLO (North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad, <http://www.nacloweb.org>) is a contest in which high school students work on language-based puzzles that test their skills in logic, pattern recognition, analytical thinking, and problem solving. The puzzles educate the students about the world’s languages and about computational techniques used in the field of Natural Language Processing.

Who Sponsors NACLO

This year’s sponsors include the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics (NAACL), the US National Science Foundation (NSF), Yahoo!, Brandeis University, Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Maryland, the University of Michigan, and individual donors.

Registration for the 2017 NACLO will start in September 2016.

More Information

NACLO - <http://www.nacloweb.org/> - contains practice problems, contest rules, and registration details for NACLO’s competitions.

IOL - <http://www.ioling.org/> - contains a record of all past IOL problems and results

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