



Four Teams from USA and Canada to Compete in the 15th International Linguistics Olympiad in Dublin, Ireland

July 7, 2017

The Competition

Selected by the North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad (NACLO), two USA teams and two Canadian teams are to compete in the 15th International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) in Dublin, Ireland from July 31 to August 4. Currently, 40 teams from 30 countries have registered to participate.

The competition will be split into two sections: an individual round, where the problems are similar to those in NACLO, 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 classic Chinese phonetic transcriptions 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 Mysore, India. The individual contest featured problems Aralle-Tabulahan, Luwian, Kunuz Nubian, Iatmül, and Jaqaru, while the team contest covered Taa, an African language spoken by approximately 2,600 people in Botswana and Namibia. The two USA teams and one Canadian team who participated excelled in both rounds of the competition: Team USA Red took home one gold and two silver medals and was the team with the highest average score in the individual round.

The Teams

Participants for the USA and Canada teams are selected based on their performance in the invitational round of NACLO 2017, which was held on March 9, 2017. 160 students competed in the invitational round, of which the top performers were selected to this year's teams.

The top four US students, including Andy Tockman (Individual Round winner) of Houston, Texas, Siye "Annie" Zhu of Andover, Massachusetts, Ziyang "Heidi" Lei of Wallingford, Connecticut, and Brian Xiao of Berwyn, Pennsylvania, will compete on Team USA Red. The next four American contestants from the invitational round, Vanessa Hu of Livingston, New

Jersey, Joey Feffer of Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, Wesley Zhang of San Diego, California, and Sonia Reilly of Columbia, Maryland, will compete on Team USA Blue.

The top four Canadian contestants from the NACLO invitational round, James Hogan of Ontario, Kevin Liang of British Columbia, Gabriel Kammer of New York, and Jane Li of British Columbia, will compete on Team Anglophone Canada.

The Francophone-Canadian Team has been selected from the Olympiade linguistique canadienne (OLCLO). The four contestants are Georges Awaad, Corinne Soucy, Samuel Ouvrard, and Antonin Benoit.

Team Francophone Canada is coached by Heather Newell from the University of Quebec in Montreal. Team Anglophone Canada is coached by Daniel Lovsted from McGill University. The two US teams are coached by Aleka Blackwell of Middle Tennessee State University, Lori Levin of Carnegie Mellon University, and Dragomir Radev of Yale University.

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, Yale University, and individual donors.

Registration for the 2018 NACLO will start in September 2017.

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

Contact Information

Aleka Blackwell - Aleka.Blackwell@mtsu.edu

Lori Levin - lsl@cs.cmu.edu

Daniel Lovsted – daniel.lovsted@gmail.com

Heather Newell – newell.heather@uqam.ca

Dragomir Radev – dragomir.radev@yale.edu