

NACLO to send three teams to the International Linguistics Olympiad in Bulgaria

The Competition

From July 20th to July 24th, two USA teams and one Canadian team, all organized by the North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad (NACLO), will compete in the 13th International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. Currently, 44 teams from a total of 29 countries are registered to participate. The competition will be split into two contests: an individual round, structured similarly to the NACLO qualifying contests, and a team round, which will test the ability of a team to work together to solve one extremely challenging problem. Past team round problems have involved topics ranging from analysis of Sanskrit poetry to translation of Vietnamese passages and Mongolian dictionaries.

The IOL is held in a different country each year. Last year, the IOL was held in Beijing, with the individual contest featuring problems in Benabena, Kiowa, Tangkin, Engenni, and Gbaya, and the team contest covering Armenian. Last year, NACLO performed extremely well in both rounds of the competition. Team USA Red won the team round and had the highest combined individual scores of any team. Team Canada won second in the individual round, and Team USA Blue tied for third.

The Teams

Participants for the USA and Canada teams are selected based on their performance in NACLO's invitational computational linguistics contest, which this year was held on March 12. 153 students competed in the invitational round, of which the top performers qualified for this year's teams.

James Wedgwood of Washington, Conor Stuart-Roe of North Carolina, James Bloxham of Massachusetts, and Kevin Yang of Washington, the top performers on the invitational round, will compete on Team USA Red.

Julian Gau of New Jersey, Kevin Q. Li of New Jersey, Nilai Sarda of Georgia, and Kevin M. Li of California will compete on Team USA Blue, the second United States team.

Four top Canadian contestants from the invitational round, James Hyett of Ontario, Ben Zhang of Ontario, Ella Bei of Alberta, and Emma McLean of Nova Scotia will compete on Team Canada.

What is NACLO?

NACLO (North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad, <http://www.nacloweb.org>) is a contest in which high school students solve pencil-and-paper 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), The Association for Computing Machinery's Special Interest Group in Information Retrieval (ACM SIGIR), the Linguistic Data Consortium (LDC), Yahoo!, Choosito!, Yieldpoint, Brandeis University, Carnegie Mellon University, the University of Michigan, the University of Washington, and individual donors.