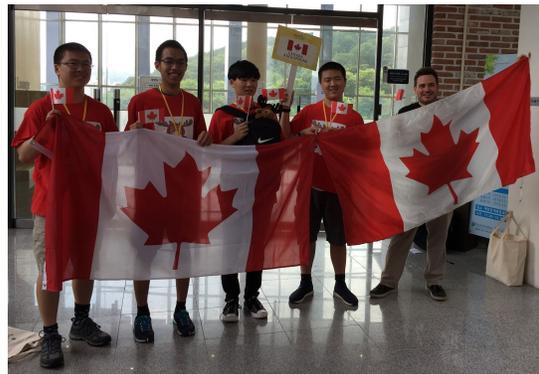**NACLO PRESS RELEASE**

(for immediate release)

NACLO Teams win ten medals and several other prizes at the 2019 International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) in Yongin, South Korea

Three NACLO teams, each consisting of four high school students, brought back huge success at the 17th International Linguistics Olympiad, held from July 29 to August 2 in Yongin, South Korea. The teams took home ten individual medals, as well as two best solution awards, and an award for the highest combined scores.

August 7, 2019
Hosted by Hankuk University of Foreign Studies
July 29 - August 2, Yongin, South Korea

On July 26, 12 students selected through the 2019 NACLO competition traveled to the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Yongin, South Korea, to join 209 contestants in 53 teams from 36 countries and territories participating in the 17th International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL). Eight students represented the United States in two teams (USA Red and USA Blue) and four students represented Anglophone Canada (team Canada Moose). The 12 students were selected through NACLO. This annual English-based competition, held since 2007, has two rounds, which are held at universities and high schools throughout the USA and Canada. This year over 1,700 students took

the open round, a three-hour test. The top 10% of the students from the open round were invited to the next round, a more difficult, four-hour test.

The IOL consists of two events: the individual and the team contest. The individual contest is a six-hour exam with five problems. This year, the individual round featured the following languages and scripts: Yonggom, Yurok, Book Pahlavi script, West Tarangan, and Nooni. In the team contest, team members collaborate to solve one particularly challenging problem. This year, teams were given three hours to work out the rules of the notation system used by rhythmic gymnastics judges. Problem solving at the IOL stresses the ability of contestants to decipher the mechanisms of languages by using logic and reasoning to explore a wide range of hypotheses.

The US teams took home seven individual medals, an honorable mention, and a best solution award. Two US team members, Wesley Zhang of USA Red and Andrew Tockman of USA Red, earned gold medals, and five earned silver medals: Ziyan Lei of USA Red, Skyelar Raiti of USA Blue, Russell Emerine of USA Red, Jeremy Zhou of USA Blue, and Pranav Krishna of USA Blue. Katherine He of USA Blue received an honorable mention. Wesley Zhang was second overall in the individual contest with a score of 95.6 and one of three contestants awarded best solution for problem 5.

Canada Moose (the Canadian Anglophone team) took home three individual medals, including the highest individual score, as well as an honorable mention and a best solution award. Ken Jiang of Canada Moose was the top individual contest medalist with a score of 98.7, earning a gold medal as well as the best solution award for problem 1. Tianqi Jiang of Canada Moose and Nathan Kim of Canada Moose took home silver medals, and Zed Li of Canada Moose received an honorable mention.

In the individual contest team rankings, the winners were USA Red, comprising Wesley Zhang, Andrew Tockman, Ziyan Lei, and Russell Emerine, with an average score of 77.74, followed by Team Bulgaria 1 with a score of 70.44 and Canada Moose with a score of 69.19. USA Red was awarded the IOL team trophy, bringing the total number of times that the US has brought home the team trophy to eight in the 13 years it has participated in the IOL.

In addition to the competition, the IOL provided contestants with a variety of other enrichment activities. During a daylong excursion to Seoul, participants visited the National Hangeul Museum, the Gyeongbokgung Palace (the main palace of the Joseon dynasty), and the commercial district of Seoul, Myeongdong. Later in the week, participants collaborated with someone from a different country to speed solve a multilingual problem prepared by the Bulgarian team, and everyone participated in a trivia game hosted by US team leader Dragomir Radev culminating in a competition among four IOL participants and the audience. "The ten days I spent in Korea," said Wesley Zhang of USA Red, "from the competition to the tourist attractions to the food and culture to just playing card games with teammates and competitors, certainly were the richest days of my life." Pranav Krishna of USA Blue said, "Whether it was the amazing performances during the opening ceremony, the problems during the contest, or the amazing friends I have made on the US team, this IOL was an unforgettable experience." Ziyan Lei added, "This year's IOL has been a fantastic experience for me and my teammates. I enjoyed Korean food and learned a lot about Hangul and its unique features and history. I'm grateful for everything the organizers prepared for us: the excursion to Seoul, the lecture on machine translation, the bonding activities, etc. And I certainly had fun playing around with the nice problems the jury wrote and edited thoughtfully. Most importantly, I was surrounded by so

many like-minded people who shared my passion for linguistics and puzzle-solving, which makes the IOL week one of the most unforgettable experiences I've had as a high school student."

The teams were trained by team leaders Dragomir Radev of Yale University, Aleka Blackwell of Middle Tennessee State University, Lori Levin of Carnegie Mellon University, and Pat Littell of the National Research Center of Canada. Other coaches included Daniel Lovsted (2013 IOL bronze medalist and 2014 IOL gold medalist), Adam Hesterberg (2007 IOL gold medalist), Ethan Chi (2018 IOL silver medalist), and Andrés Pablo Salanova of the University of Ottawa. The US teams were accompanied to the 2019 IOL by two representatives from the Linguistic Society of America's Committee on AP Linguistics, Suzanne Loosen from Milwaukee Public Schools and Jeffrey Heinz from Stony Brook University, who are conducting a study on the teaching of linguistics at the high school level around the world.

Other members of the NACLO organizing committee include Adam Hesterberg of MIT, William Yang of Yale University, Shuli Jones of MIT, Ethan Chi of Stanford, and Kevin Liang of the University of Pennsylvania. The teams' 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), Brandeis University, Carnegie Mellon University, Yale University, Middle Tennessee State University, and individual donors.

Registration for NACLO 2020 will start in September. Check http://www.nacloweb.org for more information.

The next IOL will be held in Ventspils, Latvia on July 20-24, 2020.

More Information
NACLO - http://www.nacloweb.org/ - practice problems, contest rules, and registration details
OLCLO - https://olclo.org/ - practice problems and registration details
IOL - http://www.ioling.org/ - all past IOL problems and results

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