[< Back](#) | [Home](#)

Computer team close to world championship

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The UCF student computer team will be vying for a world championship after winning the Southeastern Collegiate Computer Programming Competition at Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, Ga. last week.

UCF teams finished first, second, 11th and 31th. The UCF Centaurus team of Jonathan Kolb, Richard Russo and Jason Daly won the program by solving eight programming problems quickest out of 77 teams, from five different states. The UCF Orion team of Phillip Dexheimer, Ambrose Feinstein, and Richard Urich finished second.

The top two teams in the region move on to the World Contest Finals in March. Although the Orion team placed second, championship rules do not allow for one school to have more than one representative at the World Contest Finals. This rule allows the third place team of Georgia Tech to move on instead.

"I'm very proud of our students," says Ali Orooji, computer science professor and advisor to the team the past 12 years. "It's a shame both teams can't both compete in the finals, but we are working on having the Orion team go on the trip with us. We feel they earned it."

UCF teams have consistently been competitive at the World Championships, finishing as high as second.

"The key to our success is good and committed students. We have had one of the better computer science departments in the region, and we want to be know as one of the best internationally as well," says Orooji.

The team will practice for seven hours a day, once a week, from now until March. "You have to prepare, even if you have the best students. You don't just walk in and win," says Orooji.