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## Students compete, compute

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Three UCF students will battle their brains out as they compete in a world championship of computer programming in Stockholm.

The Battle of the Brains competition lasts from April 18 to 22.

The 33rd annual Association for Computing Machinery International Collegiate Programming Contest World Finals is sponsored by IBM.

The competition features almost 2,000 universities from over 80 countries, according to the AMC-ICPC Web site.

UCF is one of 21 U.S. universities attending the competition, according to Ali Orooji associate professor and adviser for the team.

"Seven thousand teams started the competition, but only 100 will go to Sweden," Orooji said. "I am very proud and excited for these students. They work very hard and are in the upper 2 percent of the world regarding computer programming."

At the regional competition held in October, 60 universities from the Southeast including the University of Florida and Georgia Institute of Technology fought for a chance to attend the ACM contest. UCF placed in the top spot and is the only one participating in the international championship.

"We have competed for 27 years," Orooji said. "The lowest we have ever placed in our region is third. No other university has finished top three every single year."

The trio of students making up the UCF team is Michael Do, Jeremy Elbourn and Stephen Fulwider.

They will be challenged to prove their programming skills by solving eight to 10 complex, real-world computer problems on one computer during a five-hour period.

The teammates have to work together to rank the difficulty of the problems, deduce the requirements, design test beds, and build software systems that solve the problems given.

They have been studying and preparing for Sweden for the past 25 Saturdays, Orooji said.

Their seven-hour practices include lectures, practice problems and follow-up discussions, Orooji said.

"Different students have different backgrounds, and we need to prepare them to know everything," Orooji said. "But this is like any other sport. We have to practice just as hard and as long as athletes do for football or basketball."

Elbourn has been on the team for three years and said he is very excited to attend the world championship of computer programming.

"It is an honor to get to go," Elbourn said. "I went last year but we did not do as well as we hoped we would. So we are preparing twice as hard and looking forward to performing much better this year."

Regarding his team members, Elbourn said they are very different but get along very well due to the extended amount of practice time they spend together.

He described their team work strategy as three parallel processors.

"Processors work together but separate," Elbourn said, "We have to understand each other because we only get one computer, but we each do what we are good at."

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