

UCF WINS NATIONAL COMPUTER PROGRAMMING TITLE, RANKS #13 IN WORLD

By Joseph Klawe-Genao - May 29, 2017



A team of three students at the University of Central Florida earned an international ranking and the title of national champions in an elite programming contest “Battle of the Brains.”

UCF’s team beat out University of California at Berkeley, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton, Cornell, and the University of Texas at Austin.

Alex Coleman (sophomore, computer science), Timothy Buzzelli (sophomore, computer science), and Josh Linge, (December 2016 graduate, master’s degree in computer science), competed at the Association of Computing Machinery’s International Collegiate Programming Contest in Rapid City, South Dakota.

ITMO University in St. Petersburg, Russia, won the world contest, UCF said, and last year UCF placed third in the nation and 28th in the world. In Fall of 2016, UCF teams placed 2nd, 3rd, and 4th out of 65 teams that competed in the U.S. Southeast Regional competition, representing UCF’s fifth consecutive regional win.

UCF's team practices 20 hours a week, including seven-to-eight hour practice sessions every Saturday, Computer Science Department Undergraduate Coordinator and Associate Professor Ali Orooji said to UCF.

"Using a sports analogy, imagine how hard a football team has to work to win a national championship. This is the same thing. You have to work very hard to put yourself above the others," Orooji, the team's faculty advisor said.

"It takes talented, devoted students who are willing to work hard, and coaches who volunteer so much of their time to coach these team members. It also takes the support from the university, which motivates us to keep going."

For 35 consecutive years, UCF has placed in the top three in the region, a record unmatched by any team in the nation, UCF said.

"UCF is a powerhouse at the ICPC," said contest director Jeff Donahoo, a computer science professor at Baylor University. "Virtually every year UCF has very competitive teams, and the region is extremely competitive. So just to make it to the world finals each year is amazing but to make it with the regularity that they do demonstrates the support of the university."

"I applaud UCF for getting behind their students and enabling them to be the best problem solvers by fostering competition."

Orooji and UCF coach Glenn Martin received lifetime coaching awards at the world finals opening ceremony.

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