

UCF prof adds up computing success



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ORLANDO — And now for the good news: Students are getting smarter every year, says Professor Ali Orooji, a computer science instructor at the University of Central Florida.

“Students are taking programming in middle school and high school, so some have two or three years experience. We build on

top of that,” he says.

Indeed they do. UCF’s team of computer programming students consistently have placed in the Southeast regional heat in the Association for Computing’s International Collegiate Programming Contest ever since UCF first entered the 24-year-old contest 18 years ago.

Orooji coached teams during the past 11 years, six of which were regional champions.

In fact, some students say they don’t want to be on the UCF team because it has placed first, second or third for the past 18 years.

“They don’t want to be on the team because they don’t want to mess up the record,” he says.

This year, Orooji received an award of excellence from IBM for his impact in the computer science field. But, says the academic coach, “It’s the team that did it.” And there’s a new crop of talent just

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around the corner: He also organizes a high school programming contest at UCF that attracts 30 to 35 teams. Says Orooji, “It’s amazing what kind of problems the high school kids can solve these days.”