



PRESS RELEASE

**USA and Canada Teams Impress Once Again
at the
2023 International Linguistics Olympiad
in Bansko, Bulgaria in 21-29 July**



Two USA teams and two Canadian teams brought back huge success at the 20th International Linguistics Olympiad, held from July 21 to July 29 in Bansko, Bulgaria. The teams took home two team medals, two honorable mentions, and eight individual medals, including an individual gold medal for Kunaal Chandrashekar of Ontario.

Representing the United States in two teams from a diversity of US states (from left to right) were Mritika Senthil of South Carolina, Benjamin Yang of Tennessee, Maya Schmidt of New Mexico, Jingyuan(Jamie) Li of Massachusetts, Darren Su of Idaho, Grant Wang of New York,

Arul Kolla of California, Deeraj Pothapragada of Illinois. The US teams were led by Lori Levin (Carnegie Mellon University) and Aleka Blackwell (Middle Tennessee State University).

Canada's Anglophone Team consisted of (left to right) Perry Dai of Ontario, Victoria Li of Massachusetts, Kunaal Chandrashekar of Ontario, and Sukrith Velmineti of North Carolina. Canada's Francophone Team was selected via the independent Olympiade Linguistique Canadienne (OLCLO). Jane Li (Johns Hopkins University) led Canada's Anglophone team.

The two USA teams and the Canada Anglophone team were selected through the North American Computational Linguistics Open competition (NACLO). This annual competition, held since 2007, has two rounds, which are held at over 180 universities and high schools throughout the USA and Canada. This year over 1,500 students competed in the Open Round, a three-hour competition. Approximately the top 10% of the students from the Open Round were invited in March to the Invitational Round, a more difficult, four-hour competition. Winners of NACLO's Invitational Round then qualified to compete in the International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL) held in Bansko, Bulgaria in July. The top 8 scorers from the USA qualified for two USA teams, and for Canada, the top four Anglophone students and the top four Francophone students were selected to compete in IOL 2023.

To prepare for the IOL, the teams had joint practice online and competed under the guidance of NACLO co-chairs Dr. Lori Levin (Carnegie Mellon University) and Dr. Aleka Blackwell (Middle Tennessee State University), program chair Tom McCoy, Anglo-Canadian chair Daniel Lovsted, and a collective of volunteer alumni coaches.

The IOL is one of twelve International Science Olympiads for secondary school students. The contest 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 Contest featured the following languages: Guazacapán Xinka, Apurinã, Coastal Marind, Plains Cree, and Supyrie. In the Team Contest, team members collaborate to solve one particularly challenging problem. Teams were given four hours to match the words from a Murrinh-patha dictionary and phrases with their English equivalents. 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.

Among the 74 competitors recognized for their performances on the Individual and Team Contests, the United States and Canada Anglophone teams took home 10 medals. The awards were ceremonially announced at Bansko's Nikola Vaptsarov Community Center. American individual medalists included Deeraj Pothapragada (silver), Arul Kolla (bronze), Maya Schmidt (bronze), Benjamin Yang (bronze), and Darren Su (bronze). Canadian recipients of the individual medals were Kunaal Chandrashekar (gold), Sukrith Velmineti (silver), and Perry Dai (bronze). Both the USA Red and Canada Anglophone teams received silver trophies in the Team Contest. In addition, Jamie Li of the United States and Victoria Li of Canada were among 29 individual participants to receive honorable mention certificates.

In addition to the competition, IOL also provided several cultural activities. The USA and Canada teams attended Friendship Days from July 21-22 with competitors from around the world. They hiked to the Bezbog Hut and visited one of the most beautiful alpine lakes in the Pirin Mountains. On the 22nd, the teams also enjoyed several games provided by the IOL Committee. In between the Individual and Team Contests, the teams visited the Rila Monastery and enjoyed the town of Bansko. Overall, all the participants had a great time at the IOL competition!

These accomplishments would not have been possible without our sponsors—the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics (NAACL), the US National Science Foundation (NSF), Middle Tennessee State University, Carnegie Mellon University, and Yale University as well as the constant support and encouragement from the Linguistic Society of America and individual donors. NACLO also cherishes the memory and contributions of Dr. Dragomir Radev, who was a driving force behind the development of this organization since its founding in 2006.

Registration for the 2024 NACLO Open Round will begin in September 2023; qualifying competitors will have the opportunity to attend the 21st IOL in Brasília, Brazil.

More Information

NACLO - <http://www.nacloweb.org/> - practice problems, contest rules, and registration details (We are transitioning to [naclo.org](http://www.naclo.org) so please be aware some parts of either site will not be available.)

OLCLO - <https://olclo.org/> - practice problems and registration details

IOL - <http://www.ioling.org/> - all past IOL problems and results

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