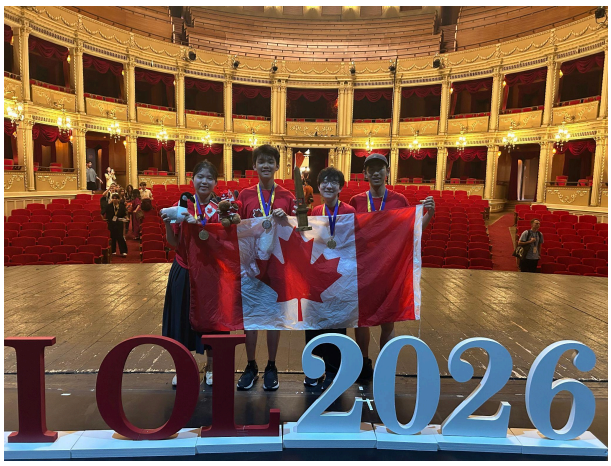
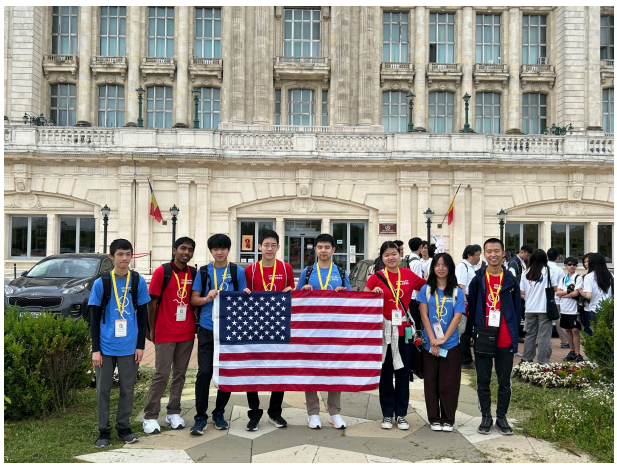
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Teams from the North American Computational Linguistics Open (NACLO) receive ten medals and other honors at the 23rd International Linguistics Olympiad (IOL)

Four NACLO contestants placed in the top five overall at the 23rd IOL in Bucharest, Romania.





Left: Canada Anglophone after the medals ceremony at the Bucharest National Opera House; right: USA Red and Blue before the opening ceremony at the Palace of Parliament, the heaviest building in the world.

From July 26 to August 2, 2026, 12 secondary students from Canada and the United States of America joined 243 contestants from 40+ countries at the 23rd IOL.

Three teams represented the English-speaking North American territories this year. From Anglophone Canada, team “Canada Moose” consisted of Yiling (Elaine) Jiang and Perry Dai (Ontario), and Peter Dong and Zi Kun (Jerry) Chen (British Columbia). Two teams represented the USA: team “USA Red” consisted of Jason Liu (Pennsylvania), Darren Su (Idaho), Sylvia Chen (California), and Rehan Babu (California); team “USA Blue” consisted of Edward Zeng (California), Sirui (Kris) Sheng (New Jersey), Nathan Mei (Michigan), and Katherine Li (California).

NACLO selects IOL participants using two exams: a three-hour Open Round, taken by approximately 1,800 students this year, and the more challenging, four-hour Invitational Round,

offered to this year's top 256 Open Round contestants. 18 students were then invited to participate in a joint online national training camp, including the 12 IOL attendees.

The IOL consisted of two tests: a six-hour, five-problem individual exam, and a four-hour, three-part exam designed for teams of four. The individual contest featured Central Yup'ik phonetics, Yélî Dnye phrases and color terms, Iquito sentences, Sakurabiat family terms, and Komnzo verbs. The team contest, authored by Angela Hou and Nina Stadermann, featured Teotitlán del Valle Zapotec retellings of the legend of Don Crescencio, a shapeshifter who helped the poor.

The problems were well-received by participants. Jerry Chen noted that "my favorite problem was probably [Yélî Dnye], since it involved some interesting ways of describing color that took some flexible thinking." Rehan Babu noted his appreciation for the clean scope of the Iquito problem, adding, "The Zaparoan family (the one Iquito branches from) has barely ever been tested before. So I'm happy I learned more about a language family I'm less familiar with. Iquito doesn't have many speakers left either (<100), so I'm glad IOL chose to forefront this language which is at relatively higher risk of falling out of use." Contestants also enjoyed preparing for and solving the team contest, which Katherine Li found "surprisingly fun." Other "olympiads never have team rounds, so it was very new and fun," reflected Sylvia Chen. Jerry Chen noted that "working with my teammates was a particularly insightful experience since I got to see the very impressive way that they approached and reasoned through problems," also commenting that team contest practices were very helpful for his general contest preparation.



USA Blue works on the team contest.

The Anglophone North American teams visited several exhibits in Romania. In Dimitrie Gusti National Village Museum, teams "USA Red" and "USA Blue" enjoyed working together to

rotate a wooden Ferris Wheel. Meanwhile, team “Canada Moose” sampled some local honey at Mierăria Bodnariu. Together, they visited the Botanical Garden in Bucharest, Romania, and the Carpathian Mountains (“the countryside and mountains were absolutely stunning,” Jerry Chen noted) and Peles Castle in Sinaia, Romania, where the team members representing the United States displayed their Zero Euro souvenir banknotes.



Members of the US team with their souvenir banknotes.

In the individual contest, the teams won 6 gold medals, achieving their most decorated individual performance ever in IOL history. Second place, third place, fourth place, and fifth place were earned by Peter Dong, Elaine Jiang, Edward Zeng, and Sylvia Chen, respectively; Darren Su and Jerry Chen joined them in claiming gold medals. One contestant, Perry Dai, earned a silver medal, and three more won bronze: Jason Liu, Kris Sheng, and Rehan Babu. Four individuals entered the Hall of Fame as Repeat Medalists: Peter Dong for earning a second gold medal in back-to-back years, Darren Su for earning a gold medal this year and a bronze medal three years prior, Perry Dai for earning a silver medal this year in addition to a bronze medal three years prior, and Jason Liu for earning a bronze medal this year and a silver medal last year.



Six out of the 14 Gold Medals given at the IOL were received by members of Team USA and Team Canada Anglophone.

Additionally, the Canada Anglophone team entered the Hall of Fame as a “Dream Team” for having all team members earn a medal in the individual contest, making Canada Anglophone the first Dream Team since 2023. Team “Canada Moose” received an honorable mention in the team contest; the highest team average in the individual contest, for which they brought home the “obelisk” trophy; and two Best Solutions in the individual contest, earned by Elaine Jiang on problem 2 and Peter Dong on problem 4; this was Canada’s first time receiving any of these distinctions. “The results we ended up achieving were completely unimaginable and extremely exciting,” Jerry Chen noted.

Aside from the teams’ stellar performance in the contest, participants enjoyed getting to know their teammates and participants from other teams. “IOL was a really great opportunity to meet [people from] other countries,” reflected Nathan Mei. Sylvia Chen noted that “probably my favorite part was the karaoke during the farewell party; it was [one] of the most incredible experiences because there was just this really strong sense of connection and everyone being less different than we think we are.” Several participants identified playing various word and card games as a highlight of their experience, with Katherine Li noting that playing “multilingual Mau-Mau” was particularly “rad.” They also found the IOL to be a great way to learn more

about linguistics, for example learning the complex rules of Irish Gaelic orthography from Team Ireland. In summary, the team found the IOL to be (per Jerry Chen) an “incredibly unique opportunity to meet some very intelligent people who are very interested in linguistics” and (per Sylvia Chen) “life-changing” and “an absolutely incredible time.”

NACLO extends its sincere appreciation for its sponsors: the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), Boomi, Virtusa, the Languages Technology Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, the Nations of the Americas Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics (NAACL), and private anonymous donors. Their generous support makes NACLO’s activities possible, including its contest and travel arrangements. We are deeply grateful for every single contribution.

We would also like to especially thank the many other people who made this event possible, including: team leaders Ken Jiang (“Canada Moose”), Arul Kolla (“USA Red”), and Cerulean Ozarow (“USA Blue”); observers Lori Levin and Aidan Wang, who accompanied the teams on their trip to Romania; the NACLO Organizing Committee, Program Committee, Academic Committee, jury and graders, problem writers, site coordinators, and of course, anyone from NACLO involved in the facilitation and organization of IOL itself.

The NACLO 2027 Open Round and Invitational Round are scheduled to take place on January 28 and March 18, 2027. The 24th IOL will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from July 21 to July 28, 2027.

View the full results from the 23rd IOL: https://ioling.org/results/2026/.