

media release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UCC RESULTS IN INTERNATIONAL MATH COMPETITION BEST IN EIGHT YEARS

KAMLOOPS-Results are in from a prestigious international math competition and UCC has posted its best performance in the past eight years.

Four UCC math students competed in the 62nd annual William Lowell Putnam Mathematics Competition Dec. 1, 2001, participating in the six-hour contest along with 3,000 other undergraduates from across Canada and the U.S. The highest-ranking students from UCC were Wei Ma (2nd year) and Sheri Perras (4th year) who both finished in the top 26 per cent among all writers.

Dr. Jim Totten, an instructor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, says the UCC team finished in the top 40 per cent. But to place at that level in this competition is an accomplishment in itself, he adds.

"The test has a total of 12 questions and each is worth 10 marks. Of the 3,000 students who wrote this, only 52 received a mark of 60 or above. If you even get 10 out of 120, that puts you in the top one third of the group," said Totten, who received the results March 12. "Half the people who write it can expect to get zero... The problems are very difficult."

The top teams in Canada were from the University of Toronto and the University of Waterloo while the top American teams came from Harvard, Stanford, Duke, University of California at Berkeley and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The William Lowell Putnam challenge is open to undergraduate students in math at any post-secondary institution in the two countries. In B.C., UCC was one of six schools to compete this year. The others were UBC, University of Victoria, SFU, UNBC and Capilano College. UCC has been involved in the competition since 1984 and posted its best result in 1986, when the team came 84th out of 270 teams.

For more information, call Dr. Jim Totten, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, UCC, 250-828-5227.

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