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March 3, 1998

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Local
Central IL

Dateline: Bloomington

4th Annual IWU Math Contest To Be Held March 7, 1998

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--IWU Associate Professor Tian-Xiao He is quite pleased with the progress of the Illinois Wesleyan University Math Society. Six years ago it was a fledgling club with just a few members. Today, it is a larger group that, according to He, "is not just a club, but a society that offers more social life" to its IWU student participants. And, along with enjoying a better social life, the students also give something back to the university, and the community, by sponsoring the Math Society's 4th annual Math Contest.

The contest will be held on Mar. 7, 1998 in the Center for Natural Science on the IWU campus. Regional high school students are given a highly competitive math test in the morning, and winners of the contest are awarded plaques and certificates in the afternoon. Each year the test is quite different, but past topics have included algebra, geometry, trigonometric functions, pre-calculus, calculus, probability, and discrete math.

Check-in for the contest begins at 9 a.m. on Saturday, with the test being administered from 10 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. followed by a luncheon in the Bertholf Commons from 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. An awards ceremony is planned from 1 p.m.-1:30 p.m. with ten awards presented to each high school grade level. There is a \$3.00 entry fee for the contest and lunch costs \$3.50. This highly successful Math Contest had approximately 170 students from 12 high schools participate last year--including schools from Urbana, Springfield, Canton, Metamora, Lexington, and Taylorville, as well as all local high schools--with similar numbers expected to attend again this year.

The IWU Math Society began as a math club six years ago, then reorganized as the Math Society four years ago in order to enlist wider student participation within a more social atmosphere. In 1994, the Society wished to design an exciting, annual event for high school students that would not only focus on math and math skills, but also give a sense of continued pride to IWU math alumni. Hence, the Math Contest was born.

Professor He recalls the countless hours spent organizing the club by its first president, David Traugott, as well as the energy put into the Society by subsequent presidents like Kara Rocheleau and Eden Ostermeier. Without their efforts and planning the Math Contest would not be the success it has become. He also notes that President Minor Myers, jr., has also given the event his "strongest support," and has addressed the high school students at each of the previous awards ceremonies.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and its Schools of Music, Theater Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletic center, a \$25 million science building, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million liberal arts center. The Carnegie Commission for the Advancement of Teaching ranks Illinois Wesleyan a "Baccalaureate I" institution, a classification that places it among the 159 highly selective National Liberal Arts Colleges. IWU won the 1997 NCAA Division III men's basketball championship.