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## 10 High Schools to Compete 5th Annual IWU Math Contest Set for March 6

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## **10 High Schools to Compete** **5th Annual IWU Math Contest Set for March 6**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.—More than 250 students from 10 central Illinois high schools will compete on March 6 (Saturday) in the fifth annual math contest, sponsored by Illinois Wesleyan University's Math Society, a student organization.

The program will run from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. in IWU's Center for Natural Sciences (CNS), 201 E. Beecher St., Bloomington.

An awards program will begin at 1 p.m. in the CNS atrium.

These high schools are participating in the math contest: Normal Community, Canton, Champaign Central, Bloomington, Sacred Heart-Griffin (Springfield), Metamora, Normal Community West, Urbana, Central Catholic (Bloomington), and Woodland Community (Streator).

This year's competition is expected to attract an additional 50 students, compared to last year.

Math Contest '99 was organized by Chris Cotner, a senior majoring in mathematics from St. Louis and president of the Math Society, and Michael Turner, a senior majoring in mathematics and computer science from Libertyville, Ill., and vice president of the Math Society.

"The math contest is a way for IWU students to get together and take advantage of a leadership opportunity," Cotner said. "We organize this event on our own—from conception to realization. It also gives us the opportunity to work with many high schools so they can see the excellence of IWU's math program."

Turner points out that many IWU math majors who work on the contest are eyeing careers as high school math teachers. Consequently, he points out, the math contest benefits those who will be student teaching by giving them the chance to work with high school students and teachers.

Students will take one of two exams. One test is designed for ninth and tenth graders, while the other exam is geared to eleventh and twelfth graders.

Each hour-long exam contains 25 multiple choice questions, covering algebra, trigonometry, geometry, pre-calculus, and logic puzzles aimed at testing problem-solving skills.

Fifteen minutes of test time is earmarked for students to answer a tiebreaker question, which is not multiple choice and has a higher degree of difficulty than other questions.

Math Society members developed exam questions, ensuring a distribution in various math disciplines. This month-long project required the IWU students to explore high school math textbooks, the Internet, past math contest exams, as well as tapping into their ingenuity and creativity.

Exam questions were proofed and reviewed by IWU faculty, including: Tian-Xiao He, associate professor of mathematics and Math Society sponsor, and Christopher Boucher, assistant professor of mathematics and computer science.

Melvin Jeter, professor and chair of mathematics, will informally brief high school faculty attending the contest about IWU's mathematics program.

An optional lunch will be provided for contestants.

While contestants are at lunch, members of the IWU Math Society will grade exams.

About 35 members of IWU's Math Society will staff the event, serving as proctors, test graders,

and in other capacities.

Individual contestants with the three highest scores in each category—ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade—will receive prizes. Team awards will be made in the ninth and tenth grade and eleventh and twelfth grade categories, based on schools with the highest average scores.

After graduation in May, Cotner will join Hewitt Associates in Lincolnshire, Ill., as a business analyst; Turner will join Ernst & Young in St. Louis as a management consultant.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts.

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