

UCSD Announces High School Statistics Competition Winners

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The winners of the first annual greater San Diego High School Honors Statistics Contest will be recognized for their achievements on March 15 at the University of California, San Diego, at an awards dinner following the Kyoto Prize lecture.

Forty-six students from nine high schools took part in the March 3 competition, which was organized by mathematicians at UCSD, in collaboration with the Greater San Diego Math Council. The organizers say that their goal is to recognize and support the efforts of local high school students and their teachers and to stimulate excellence in the study of statistics and probability.

"We hope to set a bar that students will strive to reach," said Bruce Arnold, director of UCSD's Math Testing and Placement Office. "Students of all abilities participate in these competitions. They do it because they enjoy being challenged. The competition provides a venue to compete and validates their efforts."

The top two students, Jamey Jester of Francis Parker School, and Ben Cosman of La Jolla High School will each receive a \$500 prize that will be presented by Hirotugu Akaike, a Japanese mathematician and 2006 Kyoto Prize Laureate in the Basic Sciences. The top five students and the coaches of the top three schools, La Jolla High School, Ramona High School and Rancho Bernardo High School, will receive graphing calculators. The competition involved two exams, one multiple choice and one written, that required students to solve mathematics problems using intuition and creativity. The exams covered the probability and statistics content from the California Mathematics Standards and the College Board Advanced Placement program. Each school entered a team of 3-8 members. The top three individual scores determined the overall team score.

At the awards dinner, selected students will present their solutions to the written portion of the examination. Guest speakers will discuss career opportunities for students interested in statistics and applications of statistics to real world problems.

The cash prizes were sponsored this year by the San Diego Chapter of the American Statistical Association. Texas Instruments donated the graphing calculators. The competition is also soliciting future sponsors.

There will be an opportunity for photos and brief interviews with competition winners and Professor Akaike following the Kyoto Prize lecture, between 5:30 and 6:00pm in the foyer of Atkinson Hall. (Directions at: [http://atkinsonhall.calit2.net/directions/.](http://atkinsonhall.calit2.net/directions/))

At the Kyoto Prize lecture, Professor Akaike will discuss the powerful statistical tool he developed, now known as the Akaike Information Criterion. AIC makes it possible to identify relationships in large volumes of data and has applications in virtually every field of science and engineering. Following Akaike's talk, mathematician Heisuka Hironaka, UCSD astrophysicist Richard Puetter and biologist Kenneth Burnham of Colorado State University will discuss how AIC facilitates research in their fields.

The Kyoto Prize lecture is free and open to the public. To secure your seat, please register in advance at <http://www.kyotoprize.org>.

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