We would like to bring to your attention an exciting program for middle and high school students: the NSF-sponsored North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad (NACLO), a contest for US and Canadian students. The NACLO consists of a challenging and fun series of puzzles in computational linguistics which students have to solve during a 3 hour test. No previous knowledge of linguistics or computing is required since the puzzles can be solved with analytic reasoning and problem-solving skills.

The first round of testing will be on Thursday, January 30, 2014 at 10:00am, at Stony Brook University, one of the NACLO testing sites. The test lasts for 3 hours, and consists of 3-8 problems (sample problems available on the NACLO website). Last year there were more than 1000 participants at 100 sites, and participation is growing. Winners of the Open Round are invited to the Invitational Round. The winners of the second Round are eligible to participate in the international competition, the International Linguistics Olympiad, one of 12 international high school science Olympiads.

We will provide a voluntary training session for students interested in participating. The training session will include practice problems, test-taking tips, as well as an overview of linguistics and computational linguistics. We will hold the training session on Sunday, January 12, 2014, 11:00am-1:00pm at Stony Brook University.

What kinds of students are interested in NACLO? Typical NACLO participants enjoy puzzles and languages. Good places to start looking for NACLO participants are math classes, language classes, computer classes, and gifted programs.

What’s in it for the students? Students participating in this Olympiad learn about a new field of study, participate in fun games, partake in an enriching experience, and add an item to their resume which will help in the college admission process.

What’s in it for us? This is a way to introduce high school students to the field of linguistics and computational linguistics. Many high school students do not know about this growing field of study.

To register: visit www.naclo.cs.cmu.edu and select Stony Brook University as your testing site.

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