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Whiz kids head to UCT for annual Mathematics Competition

Competition reaches far and wide in the Western Cape

Some 7,000 students from high schools as far afield as Riversdale and Knysna in the Western Cape will participate in the University of Cape Town's Mathematics Competition on 10 April 2014.

The competition, which started in 1977 and moved to the UCT campus in 1980, identifies promising pupils and offers them opportunities to develop their mathematical talents. The top 30 students in each grade will be invited to take part in the UCT Invitational Mathematical Challenge, a contest paper written a few weeks later. The top students from the challenge round will then be invited to the third and final round, the UCT Mathematics Olympiad, a week later.

Teams representing Western Province in the national South African Interprovincial Mathematics Olympiad, organised by the South African Mathematics Foundation during September each year, will be selected from the ranks of the winners of the UCT competition.

Schools in UCT's 100UP programme will be among the participating schools in the UCT Mathematics Competition. The 100UP initiative aims to address the problem of under-representation by targeting school learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and coaching them towards access to the university. The pilot project started in 2011 in Khayelitsha in Cape Town, with five Grade 10 learners identified from each of the 20 high schools in the area. 100UP is now running at capacity, with a total of 300 learners per year enrolled in the programme.

Professor John Webb, Director of the UCT Mathematics Competition, says: "We use the UCT Mathematics Competition to promote interest in mathematics, and to identify promising young talent. The enthusiastic response from both teachers and pupils proves that the subject can be made enjoyable and accessible to everyone."

Over 250 mathematics teachers have signed up to assist in running the event, backed by a team from UCT. A prize-giving ceremony will be held at the Baxter Concert Hall, Rondebosch, Cape Town, on 14 May 2014.

This year's sponsors of the UCT Mathematics Competition are Capitec Bank, Aurecon, St James Software, Casio and Oxford University Press.

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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