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**Five Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Students Advance in
Computational Linguistics Competition**

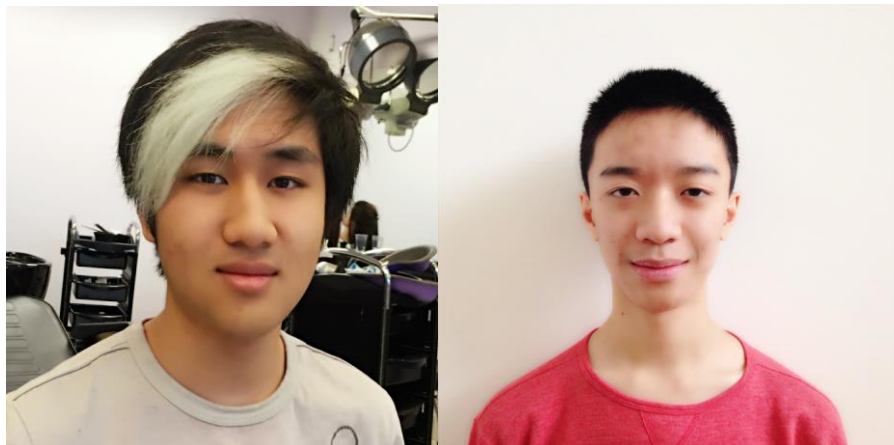
Silver Spring, MD—Five Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program students qualified for the second round of testing, which took place on March 12, to determine the four members of the U.S. team for the 2015 International Computational Linguistics Olympiad, to be held this July 20-25 in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria. This means that these students were among the top ten percent of scorers on the first round of the North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad (NACLO) Competition, in which approximately 1,500 students participated on January 29. The five students (with their grade levels) who qualified are Alan Li (12), Arun Ramamurthy (12), Victoria Tsai (11), and Victor Xu (12) of Rockville and Josephine Yu (11) of Potomac.

NACLO gives students the opportunity to solve linguistic puzzles and use logic skills to explore the diversity and consistency of language. For example, problems may involve deciphering sentences in an obscure language, analyzing foreign grammars, and identifying computational properties of a language. In three hours, using only paper and pencils, students are presented eight challenging problems to solve using speed and creative thinking.

NACLO Round 2 qualifier Alan Li offers his gratitude, “I was really surprised to hear that I was selected to advance to the second round of NACLO, and it really just goes to show how much of a role the Blair magnet played in helping me, as a student, to learn, develop, and solidify certain analysis skills and techniques. I specifically want to thank Mr. Rose for giving us the opportunity to participate in this unique Olympiad and for helping me develop my math skills, and therefore logic skills, that I used to analyze linguistics.”

Fellow NACLO Round 2 qualifier Victor Xu agrees, “I enjoyed taking the NACLO because it challenges my logical reasoning skills. Taking Mr. Rose’s logic class and other Blair magnet classes has improved my reasoning skills, which has allowed me to perform well on the NACLO.”

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Blair Magnet seniors (from left) Alan Li and Victor Xu, and three of their classmates, advanced to Round 2 of competition to select four students who will represent the U.S. at the 2015 International Computational Linguistics Olympiad.
(Photos courtesy of Mrs. Kate Li and Mrs. Lijun Xiong, respectively)

In 2012, Blair Magnet alumnus Sam Zbarsky was one of four students to represent the U.S. as a member of its linguistics team. In fact, he earned an honorable mention at the 2012 International Linguistics Olympiad, which was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia on July 29-August 4 of that year.

About The Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation

This organization was founded by a group of concerned students, teachers, administrators, and alumni in 2008. Its purpose is to promote science, mathematics, and computer science education by supporting the Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School in its efforts to develop resources and refine practices needed to provide a rigorous and enriched education for students, staff, and the community at large. The Foundation is incorporated in the state of Maryland and is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

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