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Young geniuses head to UCT for annual Mathematics Competition

Please cite Ms Gerda Kruger, Executive Director, Communications and Marketing Department

Some 7,500 students from high schools all over the Western Cape, including as far afield as Bredasdorp and George, will participate in the University of Cape Town's Mathematics Competition on the evening of 16 April 2015.

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 every September, will be selected from the winners of the UCT competition.

Schools in UCT's 100UP programme will be among the participants in the UCT Mathematics Competition. The 100UP initiative targets learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and coaches them towards access to tertiary education. The 100UP pilot project started in 2011 in Khayelitsha, 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. The UCT Mathematics Competition this year attracted entrants from 18 schools from the programme, more than double last year's number.

Professor John Webb, Director of the UCT Mathematics Competition, says: "The UCT Mathematics Competition gives bright students an opportunity to show their high mathematical skills and to be challenged. It shows that maths can be fun and it encourages students to look beyond the school curriculum to allow their true mathematical talent to shine through. 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, including UCT student volunteers. A prize-giving ceremony will be held at the Baxter Concert Hall, Rondebosch, Cape Town, on 21 May 2015.

This year's sponsors of the UCT Mathematics Competition are Capitec Bank, Aurecon, j5 International, Casio and Oxford University Press.

ENDS

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