First Asia-Pacific Mathematics Competition for undergraduates attracts 459 entrants – winners announced

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The Simon Marais Mathematics Competition, the first ever maths competition for universities across the Asia-Pacific, attracted 459 entries from 33 universities across seven countries.

Three categories shared in the AUD$100,000 prize money. In the University section, the University of Hong Kong took out first prize, second was the University of Melbourne and third Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

In the Individual category first place went to Yan Sheng Ang from the National University of Singapore. In the Pairs category, first place went to the National University of Singapore's Yao'an Li and Si Wei How. The top Australian students were Yong See Foo and Ilia Kucherov from the University of Melbourne in the Individual Category and Jongmin Lim and Edric Wang from the University of Sydney in the Pairs category.

A total of thirteen Australian students from the University of Melbourne, Monash, the University of Sydney, the University of Western Australia and the University of Wollongong featured in the prizes for the top 10 individuals and pairs. These students will be invited to apply for an internship at Woodside, a leading Australian oil and gas company, which is looking for students with strong quantitative skills.

Internships are also being offered at McKinsey & Company's specialist analytics arm, QuantumBlack, which operates at the intersection of strategy, technology and design to improve performance outcomes for organisations.

The competition is in memory of the late Dr Simon Marais, a South African-born physicist who became a prominent contrarian asset manager with Allan Gray in South Africa and latterly in Australia. Dr Marais maintained a life-long passion for mathematics and problem solving after completing a Ph.D. in Theoretical Physics at Cambridge University in 1991.

Said Dr Norm Do, a mathematician from Monash University and chair of the Problem Committee: "The interest in the competition far exceeded our expectations. The students' submissions were of a very high standard, especially given the vast majority of participants have had no prior experience with mathematical problem-solving competitions.

"Our vision is to have a maths competition which encourages creative problem-solving among undergraduate students and to identify talented mathematicians and scientists, and promote inter-university interactions.

"We received entries from Australia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, India and Thailand. Our intention is to extend this further in 2018 as word of the Simon Marais Maths Competition spreads."

The Organising Committee (led by Professor Tony Guttmann) and the Problem Committee drew from academics across the region and further afield, many of whom had experience in the International Mathematics Olympiad.

Further details for the Simon Marais Mathematics Competition and a full list of prize winners can be found on the website: http://www.simonmarais.org/

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