

Ten New Jersey High Schools Compete in Mathematical Mayhem at Stockton University

Winners from Absegami, Atlantic County Institute of Technology, Cedar Creek, Ocean City and Middletown High School North

For Immediate Release; Photos of Winners and Participants

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Galloway, NJ – The fifth annual Mathematical Mayhem brought nearly 90 students from 10 area high schools to Stockton University to compete in individual and team exams designed to challenge students and encourage their pursuit of being problem solvers.

“Continue to foster your love for math,” said Susan Davenport, interim provost and executive vice president.

Math is versatile, marketable and offers many career choices, she said.

Peter Straub, dean of the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, explained, “The world reduces to patterns” that can be modeled through mathematics.

“Math has practical applications and underlies everything scientists and engineers do,” he said.

Dr. Chia-Lin Wu, of Galloway, professor of Mathematics and the event founder, created and graded the tests with fellow Mathematics faculty. The number of high school students and their teachers as well as Stockton student volunteers who sacrificed their sleep on a Saturday morning was a testament to their dedication, he said.

Bob Cacioppo, a 1990 Stockton Mathematics graduate and a math teacher at Atlantic City High School, and fellow teacher Kelli Miklinevich, who earned her Master of Arts in Education from Stockton, brought seven students to compete.

Cacioppo said, “Numbers matter. People matter. We always try to relate numbers to patterns and relationships. If we can see a pattern, we can most likely project an outcome and be better able to predict and prepare.”

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Data is everywhere, but “it’s how we use it that reflects who we are,” he said.

Miklinevich said, “It’s nice for these students to be recognized for what they are good at.”

Kara Teehan, a 2015 Stockton Mathematics and Education graduate, participated in the event last year as a student volunteer and returned this year as a first-year math teacher at Middletown High School North in Monmouth County with seven competitors.

“A good knowledge base in math prepares students for many careers,” said Teehan, who was excited to be back on campus.

“Work hard, study hard and get involved,” are her words of advice to students.

Teehan, of Middletown, was hired after conducting her student teaching at the high school.

Sophomore Rohan Moogi is taking her honors Pre-calculus and Algebra II class. He said, “She is one of the best teachers I’ve had so far. Her tests are hard, but she’s a good teacher.”

While on a tour of the campus after the exams, Moogi said, “This has been a great first college visit.”

Kendrick Keough, of Toms River, also a 2015 Stockton Mathematics and Education graduate, was hired at Southern Regional High School after graduation. “I wouldn’t be where I am today without Dr. Wu,” he said.

His advice to anyone pursuing math is to “get outside your comfort zone because a math degree offers many options to explore.”

He values his student teaching and field work experiences for helping him to see his academic career coming to life in a real classroom. “Immersing yourself in the teaching experience allows you to see what it’s all about,” he explained.

Both Teehan and Keough have younger siblings, Trevor Teehan and Kyle Keough, who are currently in Stockton’s Math program and served as event volunteers.

Stockton has a great connection with Math alumni, explained Bradley Forrest, associate professor of Mathematics. “Students who took part in running the competition saw the value and came back [as teachers with their students],” he said.

“We are growing something,” he added.

From just 30 competitors, the competition has tripled in size.

Ciaran Wagner, a senior at Mainland Regional High School, likes math because it’s logical and absolute. He wants to be a game designer and developer, so he needs a solid math foundation for programming because “math and logic are what make the games function.”

Del Padiz, a sophomore at Mainland, said the exams challenged him to think about creative ways to solve difficult problems. He hopes to be a biomedical engineer or a neurosurgeon.

Chris Stafford, a math teacher at Egg Harbor Township High School, said, “Having this competition is such a great opportunity for our students.”

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Math Mayhem is sponsored by Stockton's School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Mathematics faculty, students in the Math Club and the Pi Mu Epsilon New Jersey Omicron chapter.

The following 10 high schools participated: Absegami High School, Atlantic City High School, Atlantic County Institute of Technology (ACIT), Cedar Creek High School, Cumberland Regional High School, Egg Harbor Township High School, Mainland Regional High School, Middletown High School North, Ocean City High School and Southern Regional High School.

Individual Round Results

1st Place: Senior Vaibhava Pendyala, Middletown High School North

2nd Place: Senior Jake Speer, Atlantic County Institute of Technology

3rd Place: Senior Chenzen Zhang, Absegami High School

Group Round Results

1st Place: Azim Khan, Ebose Eigbe and Nicholas Klapatch, Cedar Creek High School

2nd Place: Liza Milov, Scott Steinberg and Kevin Yang, Ocean City High School

3rd Place: Cameron Dundas, Matt Kobilis, Vaibhava Pendyala, Middletown High School North

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