

University students represent region at international contest

By Brian Bloch
Emerald Associate Editor

A team of four University students representing the Pacific region will travel to Washington, D.C. next month to compete in an international computer problem solving competition.

Graduate students Bill Nitzberg and Michelle Thibault and undergraduates Dave Koblas and Ed Kilham, along with faculty adviser John Conery, will make the trip Feb. 19-21 as part of a national computer conference sponsored by the Association for Computing Machinery.

The team earned a trip to the competition by placing third in a regional problem-solving competition at the University of Portland on Nov. 18. They finished behind two teams from Stanford University and edged out a team from the University of California at Berkeley.

Although the Berkeley team also completed three of the

problems within the six hour time limit, the University team finished the problems faster, which earned them one of the two spots representing the region. Stanford will send only one team because each school is limited to one entry.

"It was terribly exciting to win the competition against teams like that," Kilham said. "There's a lot of energy in this already."

The competition will showcase teams from around the country whose goal will be to finish as many of the six to eight problems in the five hour time limit, Kilham said.

Each member takes one problem and begins to work "like a bat out of hell," he said. "It's a lot like a five hour mid-term."

Because each team has only one computer terminal to work on and due to the varying difficulty of the problems, Conery said success must be a team effort.

"It's much more of a team effort than you might think," Conery said. "Under time pres-

sure, those problems become pretty tough to do. The problems at the regional competition were very, very difficult."

"Right now our focus is working on teamwork," Kilham said. "We want to know how everybody works together, what each of our strengths are."

While the trip will give the team a chance to meet other computer programmers and tour the nation's capital, Kilham said the ultimate goal is to win.

"We're going against some of the top universities in the nation," he said. "But we're real confident because we have an exceptional team. We'll be there to win."

Correction

In a story in Monday's *Emerald* Richard Rodriguez's name was misspelled. The *Emerald* regrets the error.

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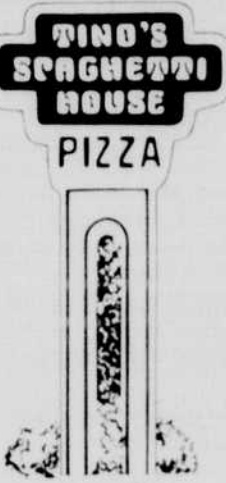
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
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