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COMAP Announces Winners of the
12th Annual Mathematical Contest in Modeling

A national panel of judges, including representatives from The Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS), the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM), and the Mathematical Association of America, is pleased to announce the nine outstanding winners of the 1996 Mathematical Contest in Modeling. For Problem A, the four winning teams are from: Pomona College, Claremont, CA; University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC; Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC; and Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA. For Problem B, the five winning teams are from: Fudan University, Shanghai, P. R. China; Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA; St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY; University of Science & Technology of China, Hefei, Anhui, P. R. China; and Washington University, St. Louis, MO. INFORMS designated as their outstanding winners: Problem B, Gettysburg College and Washington University. As their outstanding winners, SIAM and MAA chose Pomona College for Problem A; and SIAM chose St. Bonaventure University for Problem B.

The 1996 MCM had 393 teams representing 235 schools in nine countries including: Australia, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, and The United States. The contest lasted four days, from Friday, February 9 to Monday, February 12, in which the teams, up to three undergraduates, were asked to research and find a solution for one of two open-ended modeling problems. Modeling problems offer no "correct" answer; the idea is to arrive at an "optimal" solution based on the model you present. This year, Problem A was to determine the presence, speed, size, and direction of a moving submarine based solely on changes in the ambient noise field of the ocean; Problem B was to determine the best selection scheme using rank-ordering, numerical scoring, and other methods judging a contest such as MCM to find the "best" papers using the least amout of work. The MCM differs from other mathematics contests in that it is the only international contest in which the teams of students work together to find a solution; other contests either have the students work alone, or have individuals work alone and combine scores for a team total.

Frank Giordano, Contest Director and Professor of Mathematics at Carroll College said, "The judges were truly elated with the quality of the work on each problem. Each year we see an improvement in the modeling capabilities of the contestants and an increase in the sophistication of both the mathematical anaylysis and use of technology employed. It was a pleasure to read the papers!!"

Incorporated in 1980, COMAP, Inc. is a national, non-profit organization that produces mathematics curriculum materials which demonstrate mathematics in real-world contexts. COMAP publishes three quarterly publications, and develops curriculum units in print, video, and software that provide K–Undergraduate educators with materials that make learning and teaching mathematics challenging and fun.

1996 MCM Statistics

- A total of 63 teams placed either Outstanding or Meritorious (16%); 114 teams placed Honorable Mention (29%); and 216 teams were Successful Participants (55%).
- 363 teams were from four-year colleges, 14 teams were from two year colleges, three teams were from high schools, and 13 teams did not report their type of institution.
- 112 teams had at least one female team member, 43 teams had two female members, and 16 teams were all-female.