

GLOBAL ROUND 2019



(From left) Akif Irfan Jefri, Ruehan Thiagarajan, Asyraf Aqasha Mohd Fadzir, Avinash Reddy, Vinesh Das Sivadas, Afifah Mohamad Radzi, Oh Jun Chuen, Haresh Kumararajah and Humairah Zeti Mohamed Halim with their winning trophies and medals after the closing and award ceremony for the Senior Division.

Thumbs up for 'Alpacas'

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WINNING 12 trophies and 165 medals at one of the World Scholar's Cup Rounds is no mean feat and this was accomplished by a team of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's Permata GENIUS@pintar college students.

In July this year, five teams comprising 15 students competed at the Beijing Global Round and were placed 12th among 600 teams from around the world.

The World Scholar's Cup is more of a celebration of learning than a competition. It is an international team academic programme with students participating from over 82 countries. Founded in 2004, it attracts students from different cultures, who are interested in learning beyond the typical school curricula, to discuss issues and ideas relevant to today. It is also famous for its unique mascot, Jerry the alpaca.



Nimeslonre Sulani with Alpaca, the mascot of the World Scholar's Cup founder Daniel Berdichevsky.

A team for the World Scholar's Cup is generally composed of three students from the same or different school. Each team participates in four standard round events: the Scholar's Bowl, Collaborative Writing, Scholar's Challenge and Team Debate.

All the competitions are based on six subjects (referred to as the syllabus): Literature, Art and Music, Science, History, Social Studies and Special Area. A theme is chosen every year, and this year it is A World On The Margins. The team from UKM's Permata GENIUS@pintar college did especially well in The Scholar's Challenge, a 120-multiple choice question competition with a one-hour time limit. The competition tests participants' understanding of all six subject areas using thematic links throughout the syllabus, and questions that require critical thinking.

In The Scholar's Bowl, which is similar to The Scholar's Challenge, the students sat in teams and used a clicker to answer questions displayed on a screen.

The team had only two weeks to prepare for the Beijing Global Round after qualifying for the competition. On how the team prepared for the competition, Fourth Former Haresh Kumararajah said: "As the competitions are all team events, we divided the subjects between us. So instead of studying six subjects, each of us only had to focus on two."

"And it's not just about memorising, we had to apply what we researched and studied to answer the questions using critical and creative thinking skills," added his teammate Vinesh Das Sivadas.

For example, in History under this year's theme, students are asked to find out: "Do all history books tell the same story? If not, what leads them to tell different stories? Do these stories ever contradict one another?" The team members found that group discussions help them better understand the subjects and sharpen the cognitive process.

Team mentor Afifah Mohamad Radzi said, "I formed the World Scholar's Cup delegation

in 2013 with only six students. Back then I was unfamiliar with the competition. So I took part in the students' discussion, studied with them and learnt many things. My students sometimes know better and they were happy to be my teacher," said the English Language, Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition teacher.

"After each global round ended, I would feel nervous thinking about the future of the World Scholar's Cup at GENIUS@pintar as my Alpacas (students) would have graduated."

"However, I get new Alpacas every year and our delegation keeps getting stronger and bigger so I decided to rope in the seniors to help teach junior members the World Scholar's Cup syllabus."

Haresh said that everyone on the team was very enthusiastic. Each team member could also fit in well with the group, despite it being varied in terms of race, age and culture.

With their big win at the Beijing Global Round, the team is eligible to enter the Tournament of Champions to be held at Yale University in the US next month. Unfortunately they could not get enough funds to finance their trip and had to let go of the opportunity.

"Everyone on the team worked really hard and they were excited they had won the opportunity to go to the Tournament of Champions," said Afifah.

"Unfortunately, without funding, it is not possible for the students to go. But to see their efforts come to fruition at the global stage has reinforced the team's spirit to try just as hard, if not harder for next year's season," she added.

This year being her last to take part in the World Scholar's Cup, Humairah Zeti Mohamed Halim said, "I learnt a lot more from the syllabus rather than the competition itself. Especially with this year's theme, we learnt about marginalisation, the minorities and challenges they face, all of which are world issues."

"Through this competition, I was able to grow as a person by educating myself about these issues."

WORLD SCHOLAR'S CUP
BEIJING GLOBAL ROUND 2019

UKM Permata GENIUS@pintar team members:

- Avinash Reddy, 15
- Amelia Siaw, 12
- Evelyn Foo Yifei, 13
- Ryan Foo Jien En, 14
- Nur Sarah Nabihah Rosman, 14
- Akif Irfan Jefri, 15
- Saidatul Husna Saiful Nizam, 16
- Ruehan Thiagarajan, 15
- Haresh Kumararajah, 16
- Asyraf Aqasha Mohd Fadzir, 15
- Hemmasshini Rajavel, 13
- Nimeslonre Sulani, 14
- Oh Jun Chuen, 17
- Vinesh Das Sivadas, 16
- Humairah Zeti Mohamed Halim, 17

Achievements:

- 12th and 14th Best Overall Team
- 6th and 3rd Best Team in the Scholar's Challenge
- 12th and 9th Best Overall Team for the Scholar's Bowl

Ryan Foo:

- 8th in the Individual Challenge junior category
- Top 25 Champion Scholar out of almost 3,000 junior participants

Haresh Kumararajah, Saidatul Husna Saiful Nizam and Avinash Reddy:

- Six gold medals for all six subjects in the Individual Challenge senior category

Oh Jun Chuen and Vinesh Das Sivadas:

- Five gold medals each for all six subjects in the Individual Challenge senior category