



**Association for  
Computing Machinery**

*Advancing Computing as a Science & Profession*

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **2020 ACM STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION WINNERS HONORED FOR OUTSTANDING PROJECTS IN DIVERSE AREAS**

#### **Graduate and Undergraduate Students Received Travel Grants to Present Their Work at Major ACM Conferences**

**New York, NY, June 9, 2020** – The winners of the 2020 Grand Finals of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) [Student Research Competition \(SRC\)](#) were recently announced, capping a year-long competition in which 356 computer science students presented research projects at 22 ACM conferences. Peter Li of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); James Davis of Virginia Tech; and Hasindu Gamaarachchi of the University of New South Wales took the top three places among graduate students. Zhaowei Xi of Tsinghua University; Alexander Zlokapa of the California Institute of Technology; and Ocean Hurd of the University of California, Santa Cruz took the top three spots among undergraduates.

Microsoft sponsors the SRC by providing travel grants of \$500 to allow exemplary computing students to attend and present their research at major ACM computing conferences around the world. Through the Student Research Competition, each participating student has the unique opportunity to attend conference sessions, gain a new understanding of the practical applications of computer science scholarship, and share their own research with other students, conference attendees and eminent scientists and practitioners. For most students, the ACM Student Research Competition is their introduction to participating in premier computing research conferences.

“This is the 17<sup>th</sup> year we’ve had the honor of recognizing outstanding graduate and undergraduate talent through the ACM Student Research Competition,” said ACM President Cherri M. Pancake. “Each year, the program grows, both in terms of student participation and the number of ACM conferences attended. It’s obvious that students like this unique challenge of their ability to undertake leading-edge research, while also honing their presentation skills in front of peers and experts in their fields. The students are also initiated into all that ACM has to offer by being granted ACM student memberships. We thank Microsoft for partnering with us to make this vital program possible.”

“Microsoft is proud to support the ACM Student Research Competition as it cultivates the next generation of computing professionals.” said [Evelyne Viegas](#), Senior Director of Global Research

Engagement at [Microsoft Research](#). “Students remark upon the sense of accomplishment they experienced from being part of a major research conference, presenting their work, and meeting top researchers, as well as like-minded peers in their own age group. We congratulate this year’s winners, as well as all the students who participated. We hope involvement in the Student Research Competition will be a source of inspiration as these young professionals launch their careers.”

Judges assess each presenter’s demonstrated knowledge, the caliber of student contributions to the research and the overall quality of their oral and visual presentations. The most successful student researchers move through the competition’s stages. In the first stages, their research posters and presentations are evaluated for content and presentation. During the Grand Finals, the students share a written 4,000-word description of their work before the final step of the competition, when an entirely new panel of judges evaluates each student’s complete body of work and selects the overall winners.

### **The 2020 Student Winners:**

#### **Graduate Category**

- First Place: Peter Li, MIT, [SIGMICRO 19](#), for his research project, [“A Mutual Information Accelerator for Autonomous Robot Exploration”](#)
- Second Place: James Davis, Virginia Tech, [ESEC/FSE 19](#), for his research project, [“On the Impact and Defeat of Regex DoS”](#)
- Third Place: Hasindu Gamaarachchi, University of New South Wales, [ESWEEK 19](#), for his research project, [“Real-time, Portable and Lightweight Nanopore DNA Sequence Analysis Using System-on-Chip”](#)

#### **Undergraduate Category**

- First Place: Zhaowei Xi, Tsinghua University, [SIGCOMM 19](#), for his research project, [“High-performance Flexible Packet Generator Using Programmable Switching ASIC”](#)
- Second Place: Alexander Zlokapa, California Institute of Technology, [SC 19](#), for his research project, [“A deep learning approach to noise prediction and circuit optimization for near-term quantum devices”](#)
- Third Place: Ocean Hurd, University of California, Santa Cruz, [ASSETS 19](#), for her research project, [“Insights for More Usable Virtual Reality Games for People with Amblyopia”](#)

### **About the ACM Student Research Competition**

[The ACM Student Research Competition](#) (SRC), sponsored by Microsoft, offers a unique forum for undergraduate and graduate students to present their original research at well-known ACM sponsored and co-sponsored conferences before a panel of judges and attendees. The SRC is a joint venture of ACM and Microsoft, which has provided generous funding of \$120,000 per competition year for this event since 2003. The top three undergraduate and graduate winners at each SRC receive prizes of \$500, \$300, and \$200, respectively (USD), an award medal and a one-year complimentary ACM student membership with access to ACM’s Digital Library.

### **About ACM**

[ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery](#), is the world’s largest educational and scientific computing society, uniting computing educators, researchers and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources and address the field’s challenges. ACM strengthens the computing profession’s collective voice through strong leadership, promotion of the highest standards, and recognition of technical excellence. ACM supports the professional growth of its members by providing opportunities for life-long learning, career development, and professional networking.