

PRESS RELEASE 03/2021

GCS Supports Team from Heidelberg University in ISC21 Student Cluster Competition

Berlin/Germany, May 18, 2021 – The Gauss Centre for Supercomputing (GCS) continues its role as sponsor of student teams up to the challenge of competing in international contests aimed at showcasing their high-performance computing (HPC) expertise. At the upcoming Student Cluster Competition (SCC), which is an integral part of the annually held International Supercomputing Conference (ISC), GCS proudly supports “The Heidelbears”. The six students from Heidelberg University are representing Germany in a field of 13 international teams that qualified for this year’s student contest, which will take place from May 24 to June 28, 2021. Other competitors come from China, Singapore, Taiwan, South Africa, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

GCS has a long track record of sponsoring SCC teams in order to encourage students to take a deeper interest in HPC and, in turn, helping develop more HPC skills in Germany. While getting young and enthusiastic talent interested in this exciting field of technology is only one part of the story, additional effort is necessary to spark students’ interest in entering a competition that requires weeks of intensive preparation—work that comes on top of their regular university curriculum.

“For students, being given the prospect of travelling to and personally participating in a renowned high-level supercomputing event is an extraordinary motivation factor. Unfortunately, ever since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, this attractive incentive has been taken away,” explains Aksel Alpay, an HPC expert at the University Computing Centre of Ruperto Carola, who jointly with his colleague Alexander Haller coaches the six students in the lead-up to the competition. Just like the conference, ISC21 Digital, the international student challenge will be held as a virtual competition only. To encourage the students to go the extra mile to participate in this special event, Aksel Alpay and his fellow coach have employed alternative methods to motivate the students. Regular virtual meetings, constant exchange via instant messaging services and discussions about relevant topics helped to form a student team that is eager to excel at the competition.

For the competition, the student teams will remotely use supercomputers at the National Supercomputing Centre Singapore and the University of Toronto. The competition tasks include testing several “real-world” applications used by scientists and researchers, including applications that address applied learning towards accelerating bioscience research.

“The Student Cluster Competition has grown to be recognized as the world championship competition for HPC talent, thus for the Heidelberg team to have qualified for participation in this event is a huge success already,” explains Dr. Claus Axel Müller, Managing Director of GCS. “We wish ‘The Heidelbears’ all the best, and we certainly hope that this demanding challenge will not only be a successful, but also an exciting and enjoyable experience for them! We are keeping our fingers crossed.”

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GCS is supporting “The Heidelbears” by providing financial assistance in preparation of the virtual cluster event. The donation will be used to help equip the students with the necessary technical devices and to finance cloud sessions in preparation of the event.



The members of team “The Heidelbears”, representing Heidelberg University in the Student Cluster Competition of ISC2021 Digital. Top, from left: Holger Wünsche, Susanne Malheiros, Falk Loewner. Bottom from left: Henrik Reinstädler, Maximilian Jalea, Sanchi Vaishnavi. © Aksel Alpay for Heidelberg University

About GCS: The Gauss Centre for Supercomputing (GCS) combines the three national supercomputing centres HLRS (High-Performance Computing Center Stuttgart), JSC (Jülich Supercomputing Centre), and LRZ (Leibniz Supercomputing Centre, Garching near Munich) into Germany’s Tier-0/1 supercomputing institution. Together the three centres provide the largest and most powerful supercomputing infrastructure in all of Europe and serve a wide range of industrial and research activities across various disciplines. They also provide top-tier training and education for the national as well as the European High Performance Computing (HPC) community. GCS is the German member of PRACE (Partnership for Advanced Computing in Europe), an international non-profit association consisting of 26 member countries, whose representative organizations create a pan-European supercomputing infrastructure, providing access to computing and data management resources and services for large-scale scientific and engineering applications at the highest performance level.

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