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News

Silicon Valley, Google execs coming for Mona Computing Society launch

Thursday, February 18, 2016

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In this October 27, 2006 file photo, a mouse and Google mousepad are shown at Google's New York office. (Photo: AP)

TECH students of the Mona Computing Society (MCS) at the University of the West Indies (UWI) are getting ready to stage a coup by bringing executives of Silicon Valley and Google to the highly anticipated launch of their version of Google's international 'Summer of Code' programme here.

The Silicon Valley executives, who are mostly of Jamaican heritage, are collaborating with the student-led initiative to get computer science students up to an international level, the MCS announced this week.

"These executives have held senior-level positions at companies such as Google, LinkedIn and various Silicon Valley start-ups. The goal is to improve Jamaican students' competitive position in the international markets," the announcement said.

Today, the executives will be joined by Google representatives at a seminar at the UWI where they will interact with students.

"The presence of Google and Jamaican Silicon Valley executives on February 18 is an extraordinary opportunity for students to interact with individuals from leading global computing environments," said the MCS.

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"The initiative which opens doors to highly accomplished Jamaicans in Silicon Valley is affording students career opportunities and stipends for deepening their competence that until now have been completely absent in Jamaica," it added.

The MCS has partnered with the Palisadoes Foundation and the University of Technology student branch of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers in launching "Calico", a 2016 programme to offer Jamaican students a US$500 stipend to write software code for various international open-source software projects during the summer holidays.

"Calico is a programme modelled on Google's Summer of Code, which offers post-secondary students around the world a chance to earn money by writing software code and learning about open-source development, while being guided by a mentor," the announcement said.

The Google Summer of Code meet-up, which is scheduled to start at 2:00 pm at the Computing Lecture Room in the Faculty of Science and Technology at the UWI Mona Campus, is part of efforts aimed at increasing student awareness of viable career paths nationally and internationally.

The meet-up follows a symposium on open-source software that was held on February 11. Other workshops for students interested in Calico are being held throughout this month.

MCS said applications to Calico will open on March 14, 2016 to Jamaican students residing in the country for the duration of the programme. The application deadline is March 25.

— Desmond Allen

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