The Mathematical Contest in Modeling is an international contest in which teams of undergraduates work collaboratively to solve an open-ended problem in applied mathematics. The 2011 contest will take place on February 10-14, 2011.

Each team of three undergraduates chooses between two problems that it can try to solve. Usually one problem involves calculus-based mathematics, and the other is based on discrete mathematics. In 2010, for example, one problem dealt with the design of baseball bats, and the other involved developing a method to assist in the investigation of serial criminals.

Students from all years -- first-year students to seniors -- can enter the MCM. Participants do not have to be mathematics majors, and they don’t need to have taken advanced courses in math. A balanced team will probably combine a variety of skills, such as mathematical knowledge, creativity in solving problems, facility with computers, and good writing ability. In past years, the SLU students who participated in the contest found it a valuable and enjoyable experience. Since most jobs involve working collaboratively on open-ended problems, the contest also prepares students for careers that involve applications of mathematics.

Further details can be found at http://www.comap.com/undergraduate/contests/.

To sign up for the contest (or to get more information about it), contact Dr. Christine Stevens in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science at <stevensc@slu.edu> or 314-977-2436.