The Chemistry Department at Lamar University hosted three guest speakers for a career forum on Friday February 18, 2011. The career forum began with STST students asking seed question to the panel to get the audience engaged. The Chemistry STST students involved were Jessica Gillispie, Kristeena Ingram, and Ashley Torbert. After the seed questions were answered the students in the audience began to ask their questions and received great response from the panel.

The event was focused on industrial chemist, the guest were – John Griffin, Chemist, Exxon Mobil Beaumont Refinery; Melissa Taylor, R&D Lab Technician, INVISTA Orange, TX; Donald Tatmon, Laboratory Quality Assurance Manager, Inspectorate America Corporation, Nederland, TX. The forum the previous year was aimed mostly towards academia, and the focus this year was shifted towards employment since southeast Texas has such a large industrial sector. This was positive because the students said that

“...this event showed that there are local scientific jobs with a variety of different positions open to graduates…”

This forum allowed students to see that there are jobs for scientist in the industrial area. The panel answered questions about what is expected of students when they graduate and what they should be doing while in school. Students gave feedback saying that this event
“...gave insight on what I need to do to work towards being a chemist...”

There were a total of 40 students who attended: 26 undergraduates (17 of which were chemistry) and 14 graduate students (all chemistry). There were 6 STST and 6 INSPIRED participants. One area that the students said could be improved is to have a mixed panel; some from pharmaceutical, some from industry, and others from academia. This is an idea that will try to be incorporated in the next year's career forum. Also, students recommended that there be more chairs, as there was standing room only. I feel that this event was very beneficial to me and to STST; it allowed students to ask the questions that only people in the industry can answer, but it also showed students that jobs are available and that finishing their degree is the best option. We have responses from the students that said this event

“...gave me the push to continue to go through school and get a job...”.

-Jessica Gillispie
STAIRSTEP Student – Chemistry