STAIRSTEP Physics Career Forum

Guest speaker: Scott Johnson and Robert Holman
November 20, 2012 – Room 107 – 10:45 am – 12:00 pm

Physics STST participants: Bryan Neal, Jose Castro, Sarah Vogler, and Jacob James
Other STST participants: Royce W. Abshire (Geology ESS)

Scott Johnson and Robert Holman came to Lamar University on November 20th to share with us their experience in teaching physics at a high school level as well as what is required to get to that point. After we were shown why a career as a physics instructor is rewarding choice, the career forum ended with an open discussion.

Both Mr. Johnson and Mr. Holman graduated with a degree in physics from Lamar University, from where they are also STAIRSTEP alumni. The career forum started with a few minutes taken to introduce each other. First, the audience gave some background information on themselves to the guests, such as previous experiences with math and science at the college level. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Holman then followed up by introducing themselves to the audience and giving their story.

Something that I learned from attending this event is that with the proper preparations, opportunities are just around the corner. Mr. Johnson, for example, used his passion in physics as well as his vast experiences with the STAIRSTEP program to acquire an entry-level job as a physics instructor at Ross S Sterling High School, where he is currently in charge of the AP Physics Program. Mr. Holman went to a job fair and within minutes of showing his credentials had more job offers than he knew what to do with! STAIRSTEP provides its students with unique opportunities, such as in attending conferences and participating in research teams. That, combined with a deep understanding of physics is sure to open many doors.

Even the most well-informed and yet opposed to the idea of teaching as a career were able to get something out of attending.

I would no longer consider [teaching] the end of the world. […] I better understand the effort required [of teachers] to carefully address and resolve the problems encountered by those students with a relatively weak math background, which should be the solid foundation that we use to understand many physical phenomena. -Sara-jeanne Vogler

This event allows us to learn about the prospects of teaching physics in high school. Scott and Robert spoke on the benefit of teaching physics to younger ages and what makes it important. They discussed the issue of teaching kids with limited knowledge in science, but with a desire of learning sciences. The speakers have identified ways to smoothen the students' transition toward more advanced topics in physics. -Jacob James

Jose Castro (event coordinator)

Statistics:
Five undergraduate participants
Two Lamar alumni, former STST, Scott Johnson & Robert Holman.
Two faculty, Cristian Bahrim and Rafael dela Madrid
Scott and Robert speaking at the Physics Career Forum on Nov. 20, 2012

Scott and Robert answering the questions asked

Group picture with Scott and Robert and the STST students who participated in the Career Forum on Nov. 20, 2012