STAIRSTEP Physics Outreach Event

April 11, 2013 – Bob Hope High School – 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Physics STST participants: Bryan Neal, Keeley Townley-Smith, Susan Salazar, and Jose Castro

During the month of April, those of us in STAIRSTEP were very busy with a number of outreach events. Among them, however, one stood out in our eyes. We visited Bob Hope High School to talk to the students about college and the benefits to studying physics. What made this outreach event special in our opinion was the fact that the students we were presenting to were high school students. As such, it was a different yet incredibly rewarding experience for us.

Everything started just like all other outreach events and, for the most part, flowed just alike as well. However, their participation was different. Yes, there were still the usual “Wow” and “How does that work?” coming from the audience, but this time there were a few new ones. We believe that it was because there were a number of seniors and juniors in the audience, they were genuinely interested in knowing what college was like, what possibilities lie in studying physics or a combination of physics and engineering, as well as what to do during the remainder of their time left in high school to be better prepared for college.

I think this event was beneficial to both [our audience as well as myself]. I felt more comfortable talking in front of students about careers in physics and the presentation itself was very informative to the students. We even had one girl ask about nuclear engineering! Afterwards, we got to talk one-on-one with some students and gave them advice on college. I really enjoyed it! – Keeley Townley-Smith

A question that was asked towards the end of the event had to do with admittance requirements for colleges and paying your way through school. Luckily for the audience, we had a very diverse group of presenters - all with different backgrounds, strengths, weaknesses, and experiences – so the question was answered from many different perspectives. Also, the benefit of this event is that it gave those of us interested in pursuing a career in teaching some “hands-on” experience in the matter.

Jose Castro (event coordinator)

Statistics:
Four undergraduate participants from the Physics Dept.
Three undergraduate participants from the Computer Science Dept.
One graduate participant from the Math Dept.
Two faculty, Drs. Cristian Bahrim and Jennifer Daniel