Ozen Career Day

On March 14, 2012, Prof. Peggy Doerschuk participated in Career Day at Ozen Media Technology and Fine Arts Magnet school. Because there were only a few students interested in computer science, Prof. Doerschuk joined the Engineering sessions. Thirty-seven 10th, 11th and 12th graders participated in two sessions. During the first 40 minutes, 4 engineers from ExxonMobil talked to the students about engineering and ExxonMobil. In the last 10 to 15 minutes, Prof. Doerschuk talked to the students about careers and degrees in computing and the STAIRSTEP program. She distributed handouts of PowerPoint slides on careers in computing, the ACM brochure on careers in computing, and the STAIRSTEP brochure. She also used robots as a hands-on demonstration of an application of computing. One female student asked about teaching at Lamar. A second female student asked which degree would be appropriate for a career in Software Engineering. A male student asked about careers/degrees in game programming. A few male students asked questions about robotics.

With only 10 to 15 minutes allotted to computing, only a very superficial description was feasible. Also, there was not enough time to distribute and collect request for information forms. The robots not only engaged the students; the interaction with the robots also seemed to open them up to asking more questions about computing.

For future events, we should try to get our own session or share the session with a smaller group. Perhaps Ozen would be receptive to a STAIRSTEP session for students who are interested in science and technology but haven’t refined their interest yet. PowerPoint presentations are not advisable, so use handouts. Also try to use some sort of hands-on demonstrations to engage the students.