The Chemistry Department at Lamar University hosted an Academic Forum, on Wednesday November 30, 2011. Professor Bernazzani began the forum with a timeline of available opportunities after receiving a bachelor’s degree. These included getting a masters degree (thesis or non-thesis), PhD, or going into a post doc program. He then introduced the panel of teachers all with different backgrounds in chemistry. The panel answered many frequently asked questions about graduate school, and killed many misconceptions about graduate school that some of the students had. The panel informed the students on what to expect from graduate school, what to expect from yourself as a graduate student, how to survive graduate, and how to successfully complete graduate school. Feedback from the students included:

“…great information for students receiving information about graduate school for the first time.”

The panel explained that graduate school was a totally different experience than undergraduate school. They were granted freedom during their research and the ability to work at their own pace. They were also granted better opportunities in the workforce as a result of attending graduate school. One of the students said:

“…gave a great timeline for graduate school, research, and real life job possibilities”
There were a total of 7 students who attended: all of which were undergraduates (4 were chemistry majors or double majoring in chemistry), and 4 STST participants. One area that the students said could be improved was having the forum be scheduled at a better time during the year. The forum was scheduled the week before finals began and we believe this hindered many students from being able to be present for the forum. We have taken into huge consideration what the students have said and it is a suggestion that we will make an effort to integrate in the next semester’s academic forum.

Despite the inconvenient timing of the event, the students thought the information presented was very valuable. For someone who knew little about graduate school before attending the forum, I feel that this event was very valuable to me and to all the students in attendance. I left the forum knowing a great amount about graduate school feeling confident that graduate school would be a great opportunity for me to pursue.

-Kristeena Ingram
STAIRSTEP Student – Chemistry