Robotics Programming Contest – Follow Up

The Bridges to STEM Careers (BSC) program, with funding from the National Science Foundation, hosted its 1st Robotics Programming on April 19th, 2014 in the Student Services Building at UHCL. 15 teams with 51 contestants participated in the competition at two levels. Winners and participants won prizes, including scholarships, internships, robotics kits and various other gifts donated by local businesses.

Credexo sponsored the event. Additional support was provided by AtLink Inc., Barrios Technology, and various other companies in the community. Community college, high school and UHCL faculty members participated actively and served as judges, technical program supervisors and masters of ceremony. Industrial representatives from Credexo, Barrios Technology and SAIC served as judges.

The event was attended by students from area schools, community colleges and also students from UHCL. The challenge consisted of two levels of competition from beginners to advanced robotics programmers. The event was limited to 15 teams, with a maximum of 4 members per team. Several teams requested to sign-up but had to be turned away once the team limit was reached. 8 beginner teams and 7 advanced teams participated in the event. The youngest team comprised of 2 students from League City Intermediate School and a student from Clear Brook High School.

During the challenge, each team spent 50 minutes at one robotics station, trying to complete up to 4 different tasks, before rotating to the second and third station. Each task was assigned a point value, and each task had to be completed and demonstrated before receiving instructions for the next task. The three stations were the Morse Code station, the Sensor station and the Tank station.

In the Beginner category, Team Paradrone comprising of students Suzanne Rodriguez, Peter Sardelich, Thao Nguyen and Carlos Martinez from UHCL placed first, and each contestant went home with $400 scholarships to UHCL, along with robotic kits priced at $100. Team Playground comprising of Faisal Alnounou, Allison Magnuson and Md Moazzem, also from UHCL, were a close second, and received $250 scholarships to UHCL and also google chromcasts.

In the Advanced category, Team Brook Nation, comprising of Toan Nguyen, Ahmad Harmouch, Bobby Pinard, and Paul Bauer from Clear Brook High School placed first, and went home with each member receiving a $500 scholarship to UHCL, along with a tank robotics kit priced at $140 each. Team Nec Reges with team members Colin Stephens, Zachary Schultheis and Javier Winkler from San Jacinto College South placed second, and received $350 scholarships to UHCL, along with google chromecasts.

The overall winner of the competition was Team Brook Nation, and they went home with an opportunity to interview for two summer internship positions at AtLinks Incorporated.

The robotics programming challenge was organized by the Bridges to Stem Careers project team comprising of San Jacinto College faculty Nate Wiggins, Norm Leibling and Jim Meeks, and UHCL faculty Sadegh Davari, Sharon Perkins Hall, Anne Reilly and Krishani Abeysekera.