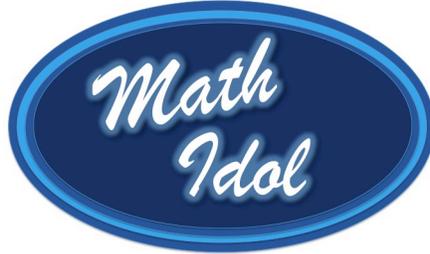


University of Texas at Arlington Sonia Kovalevsky Math Day
April 21, 2012
Featured Activity



One of the highlights of the Sonia Kovalevsky Math Day at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) was the “Math Idol” career panel. The panel consisted of five women, including one UTA professor, two UTA graduate students, one information technology asset manager for Dell Services, and one Sr. Vice President and actuary at CitiAssurance Services.

The 50 minute event was held in the UTA Planetarium, creating a fun and exciting environment for the students. Each panelist was introduced with a slideshow/movie, which was a collage of pictures of the panelists when they were in the 6-8th grade, quotes about themselves, and upbeat music. Prior to the event, we had asked the panelists to answer a few questions about what they do, where they were in the 6-8th grade, and something they struggled with in their math classes. This was an excellent way to energize the students and provide them with some information about the panelists in a fun, superstar, American Idol fashion.

Then for the remaining 40 minutes, the 6-8th girls asked questions to the panelists. From the questions, it was apparent that the girls related to the diversity of the panelists. They asked questions regarding dealing with language barriers, obtaining family support, and dealing with prejudices in school. Many of the questions addressed math classes, math teachers, and different career opportunities. The girls asked the panelists if they were always good in math, if they always knew that they wanted to do math, and who their mentors and idols were. To encourage the girls to ask questions, we gave each girl a raffle ticket if they asked a question. The girls were so eager to ask questions, that unfortunately we ran out of time and could not get to everyone’s questions.

The feedback and response from this event was overwhelmingly positive. One student remarked on her evaluation, “I liked the math idol panel because we learned about others lives and it inspired me to actually keep my mind on school and go to college.” Another student wrote that the Math Idol Panel “made me feel like ... I'm good at math. I just think I'm not. And it made me want to participate in my math class more.” We believe the Math Idol panel was a fun, inspirational event for many of the girls at our SK Day.

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