

Title of Session: FIRST Robotics
Moderator: Patricia Chen
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Room: Robotics Group (K-12)

PatriciaCh: hello everyone

KatieBe: Hi all

PatriciaCh: Katie are you a teacher?

KatieBe: Yes, I teach upper level high school math

PatriciaCh: are you involved with any robotics club or activities?

KatieBe: No but there is talk of starting one at our school

PatriciaCh: VEX or FRC ?

KatieBe: I don't know

PatriciaCh: Where are you located?

KatieBe: Southern CA

PatriciaCh: the website is <http://www.usfirst.org/>

PatriciaCh: check it out....VEX is not as expensive as FRC

KatieBe: ok I will

PatriciaCh: You have many teams in your area

KatieBe: I know, that's why they want to start one

PatriciaCh: It is a lot of work....but worthwhile....are you planning to be one of the teachers?

KatieBe: I don't know. Getting, my master's takes a lot of time right now

PatriciaCh: True.....it is easier if several teachers are involved.....one teacher will be lead....the others in supporting roles

KatieBe: Then I would probably be a supporting teacher

PatriciaCh: I am don't know what your school rules are....some schools required a teacher to be on duty... a supporting teacher can help out

KatieBe: Gotcha

PatriciaCh: I am a middle school math teacher....I sponsor a high school team last year....due to no teacher at that high school would do it

PatriciaCh: but there were 3 of us...3 high schools together....so we divvy up the duty

PatriciaCh: but it is fun to travel to the competitions

KatieBe: That's great!

PatriciaCh: I am not sure if you are aware that there are many scholarship opportunities for the students

PatriciaCh: where about are you located in So California?

KatieBe: Solana Beach

PatriciaCh: what is the nearest large city?

PatriciaCh: You have 2 regional competitions in the So Cal area....San Diego and LA.....when you qualify...your team goes to Atlanta GA

KatieBe: San Diego

PatriciaCh: So your team will go to San Diego and you can also sign up for another regional.....registering for the regional and Atlanta is a major cost

PatriciaCh: factor

KatieBe: Ok, sounds good

KatieBe: So about how many times does the club meet in a week?

PatriciaCh: Do you have any manufacturing capabilities in your school

PatriciaCh: Meeting schedule is decided by the team

PatriciaCh: BUT you have only 6 weeks to design and built the robot.....

PatriciaCh: for most teams....students can meet every day and including weekends - all day...

KatieBe: No manufacturing capabilities

PatriciaCh: so it is good to have a group of supporting teachers

PatriciaCh: do you have any shops

KatieBe: no, we're a small private school and we have drama and broadcasting, no shop classes

PatriciaCh: like auto, carpentry ...shops programs in your school

PatriciaCh: okay....

PatriciaCh: if you canand you shouldinvolve the parents as well....

KatieBe: I'm sure the parents will help

PatriciaCh: you can build the robot with home tools....drills....table saw ...etc.

KatieBe: I'm sure we can get the parent's help with that

PatriciaCh: borrow the equipment from them....have them teach the kids how to use them....

PatriciaCh: remember safety first....like goggles, etc...

KatieBe: right:-)

PatriciaCh: most teams started that way.....but as with anything....you get better over time....

PatriciaCh: we had a team in the Florida Regional.....the team couldn't get any wood donated...they took an old teacher desk and made a robot from it....

KatieBe: Wow! That's using your resources

PatriciaCh: yes.....use what you have.....

PatriciaCh: today.....most robots are made out of aluminum.....that is how sophisticated things have gotten... and some teams are rich in money resources.....they have a machine shop that travels with them to competition.....well...my team is not one of them....I look with envy

PatriciaCh: Now if you want the experience and less costly option....look into VEX....this is the time to register for the VEX competition....this program is about 2 -3 years old

PatriciaCh: many teams cannot afford FRC.....so they switched to VEX

KatieBe: Ok, good to know

PatriciaCh: if you want I can give you my school email ...if you have any more questions...you can contact me

KatieBe: What did the last Robot you built do? That would be great, thanks!

PatriciaCh: The game was called Aim High....I called it a hybrid game of soccer and basketball....you have 3 periods....you have 6 robots on the field....3 on each alliance....one alliance gets to shoot in period 1...the other plays defense.....then period 2....the position changes....period 3 ...free for all...

KatieBe: That's so cool!

PatriciaCh: the way to scoreshoot the ball into the hoop or feed the balls into the side chute

PatriciaCh: I am going to try to find video clips for you....I will be right back

PatriciaCh: it was a fun game

KatieBe: Excellent!

PatriciaCh: This is the Virginia Regional
<http://soap.circuitrunners.com/2006/movies/virginia/>

KatieBe: Ok I'll make sure I watch that

JeffC joined the room.

KatieBe: Hi Jeff

JeffC waves

PatriciaCh: the other only thing that I can caution you is...FIRST is contagious and additive

JeffC wonders what's new on the Robotics front.

PatriciaCh: Hi Jeff

PatriciaCh: FLL is up and running and so is VEX

PatriciaCh: my school email is chenp@martin.k12.fl.us

KatieBe: Great thanks!

PatriciaCh: which one your school will participate depends largely on money.....registering for the competition is costly....so is building a robot.....

PatriciaCh: VEX is much cheaper.....my team is doing both VEX and FRC.....because of the largess of the team

PatriciaCh: Jeff...are your kids involve with FLL this year?

PatriciaCh: Katie - do you think you will try to lend a supporting role?

KatieBe: Yes, I am also the Varsity Academic team coach and the faculty advisor for the peer review committee so my time is limited

PatriciaCh: yes.....most definitely.....I was a high school mentor...mentor for my school LEGO team...mentor for 2 teachers.....I was so tired by the end of the school year.....

PatriciaCh: the only good thing isthe robotics is only 6 weeks long...but they are long weeks

KatieBe: Working at a small school , it's easy to get caught up in so many functions

PatriciaCh: so if four to five teachers can help each other out.....it eases the duty pain

PatriciaCh: yes.....way too easy.....and you are working on your masters.....time is very limited.... so be warned.....FRC is time consuming as well

KatieBe: ok, good thing to keep in mind

PatriciaCh: FIRST is a fun program...but time consuming.....I am coaching a FLL team right now....we meet 4 afternoons a week...1 hour onlyone student has to take the bus home

PatriciaCh: there are times...I wish I can cancel but we are preparing for the tournamentand the kids look forward to it so.....and we need the time to workso I don't cancel at all.

KatieBe: You are dedicated. I have a dog who can't be locked up for more than 9 hours so I have to leave school at the same time every day

PatriciaCh: FIRST is one activity that a student doesn't have to be a geek or jock.....there are not too many clubsthat a normal student can join in...

KatieBe: How many years have you been doing this Patricia?

PatriciaCh: Call me Pat.....my son as a freshman was on FRC....followed by my daughterso it is 8 years

PatriciaCh: also....participation in FIRST allowed students to apply for summer internships with NASA

KatieBe: That's wonderful, wow NASA?

KatieBe: What if I want the internship

PatriciaCh: actually any student can apply.....but NASA always asks if you have been on an FRC team....my daughter participated (this past summer)

KatieBe: Did she enjoy it?

PatriciaCh: actually you can....they do have some sort of internship for teachers

KatieBe: Excellent! That would be amazing!

PatriciaCh: she did.....she was paid.....so they flew the students to Boston, Houston, and JPL.....stayed in the top rated hotel.....and other side trips that I cannot remember....

PatriciaCh: they did do work.....when or home...I am not sure but I have a video of ...her group making their presentation

PatriciaCh: I meant to say when or how

KatieBe: I bet that looks good on a college application too

KatieBe: that could be a big selling point at my school

PatriciaCh: she was a college freshman when she applied.....so high school and college students can apply...

PatriciaCh: also look at the scholarships that are offered as well.....if some students get it....there are free rides to great schools

KatieBe: Awesome!

PatriciaCh: we did not know about NASA until this past January.....it is all becauseI am learning to net work.....I too was working on my Masters during this time period

PatriciaCh: yes....it is a great selling point.....get the school, parents and community involved.....

KatieBe: Did you get a specialization or a master in Ed

PatriciaCh: if you can get the machine shops in your area to help outit will help a lot

PatriciaCh: my masters is in....Technology in Curriculum

PatriciaCh: what is your masters in?

KatieBe: It's supposed to be a specialization in math but I'm not sure what changes the program is going to go through

PatriciaCh: where are you taking classes?

KatieBe: Cal State San Marcos

PatriciaCh: How much longer?

KatieBe: I just started, this is my first 6 units and there are 27 more to go!

PatriciaCh: wow!

PatriciaCh: what kind of changes in the program?

PatriciaCh: are you taking live classes or online?

KatieBe: I'm not sure something about not having the specialization on the certificate but rather the school can give you a letter to accompany the degree

KatieBe: Both, one online and one in person right now

PatriciaCh: I am not sure what is on my diploma...it has been several years.....it can be that I don't the specialization on it as well

KatieBe: I am thinking about switching to a master's in admin but I don't know what that entails

PatriciaCh: I did all my classes online....I live in Florida.....at thewe do not have a major university nearby.....live classes meant.....drive 2 hours after work or just go on weekends.....so online classes was the solution

KatieBe: Yeah, they're not bad as far as scheduling goes

PatriciaCh: I can work at night.....after I grade papers and work with my kids....that is why I was able to be involved with FRC - all this time

PatriciaCh: I was only allowed to take 1 class at a time....each one was an 8 weeks class

KatieBe: That's not too bad, I have two that last a semester

PatriciaCh: that was a decision on the part of the university....they felt most of the students were teachers and working....so it is hard to take 2 -3 classes and do well....at first, I was not happy with the idea....but as time went on.....I was glad that I was limited to 1 class at a time

PatriciaCh: it allowed me to do other things as well.....not just work and school - all the time

KatieBe: I hear ya, two is killing me

PatriciaCh: yes....it is hard....multi- tasking is not easy

KatieBe: Ok, Pat I'm going to take off so I can take the dog for a much needed walk. You've been great and thanks so much for all the advice and for your e-mail

PatriciaCh: I enjoy chatting with you...contact me if you need any help or have questions

PatriciaCh: Good night

KatieBe: Good night!

KatieBe left the room (signed off).

BJB2: nice discussion, Pat

PatriciaCh: hey BJ are you there?

PatriciaCh: ah...you beat me to the punch...

PatriciaCh: yes it was a nice discussion....I enjoyed this session as well as the last one

BJB2: that's great...kind of makes up for the times when no one shows up.

BJB2 . o O (which happens to us all from time to time)

PatriciaCh: yes....also....this room is meant to try to get teachers interestedso they will try to start a team....so many opportunities out there

BJB2 agrees

PatriciaCh: is thought ...colon then slash

BJB2: thinking is /th thought

BJB2 . o O (/th I'm thinking)

PatriciaCh . o O (I forget)

BJB2 cheers...you remember!

PatriciaCh . o O (I remember the waves)

PatriciaCh waves

BJB2 waves back

PatriciaCh: I will remember this.....

BJB2: same as anything else...the more you do it the easier it is

PatriciaCh: true....well I am going to call it a night

BJB2: me too! Sleep well

PatriciaCh: you too....talk to you soon