

ENGINEERING CAREER DAY

2009

On May 15, 131 students from 10 Rhode Island high school programs attended the third annual [Engineering Career Day](#), sponsored by the University of Rhode Island Transportation Center (URITC), the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT), the [Federal Highway Administration](#) and the Rhode Island Consulting Engineers. It was held at URI's Kingston Campus.

The students were welcomed to the event by representatives of the URITC, RIDOT and [URI's College of Engineering](#). Maria Beltre, an engineering major at URI, told the students how her experience at Engineering Career Day while in high school inspired her to study engineering in college.

Divided into four groups, the students learned about the many career options related to transportation engineering by rotating through four learning labs. The labs, which were led by industry professionals and URI faculty, included:

- Bridge and Geotechnical Engineering
- Highway and Traffic Engineering
- Surveys and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Storm Water Management, Hazardous Materials, Environmental Planning

Survey results showed that the Bridge and Geotechnical Engineering learning lab was the favorite of 68% of the students. More specifically, the [West Point Bridge Builder](#) computer program was the most favored station. The program allows the user to build a bridge and test its efficiency.

According to the survey results, Engineering Career Day accomplished its objective of providing students with the information they need to consider a career path in transportation engineering. When asked how likely they were to consider such a career before the event, 44% said somewhat likely and only 8% said very likely. By contrast, 73% said they were somewhat likely to consider a career in transportation engineering after their experience at Engineering Career Day and 20% said very likely.

The response from teachers and advisors was also positive.

"I thought the event was wonderful, well thought out, and eye opening to all that attended," said Susan Cunningham, a science teacher at Middletown High School. "The presenters were personable and very informative, the hands-on activities, computer simulations, and PowerPoint presentations were excellent, engaging and well designed for the students."



Students used the West Point Bridge Builder computer program.
Photo by Neil Nachbar

Students came from all over Rhode Island to participate in Engineering Career Day, including:

- Blackstone Academy (Pawtucket)
- Central Falls High School (Central Falls)
- East Bay Met School (Newport)
- East Providence Career & Technical Center (East Providence)
- GAP Program/Talent Development (Providence)
- Middletown High School (Middletown)
- Newport Area Career & Technical Center (Newport)
- Shea High School (Pawtucket)
- The College Crusade of Rhode Island (Providence)
- Tolman High School (Pawtucket)

Representing the engineering industry, were volunteers from:

- Rhode Island Consulting Engineers (RICE)
- The Maguire Group, Inc.
- Pare Corporation, Inc.
- Gordon R. Archibald, Inc.
- Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.
- The Beta Group, Inc.
- Bryant Associates, Inc.
- Camp Dresser & McKee, Inc.
- Crossman Engineering, Inc.