1-22-2019

Leaving Their Mark: Internship Provides Students Work Experience on SECCM Labs Project

Courtney Dell'Agnese
Roger Williams University

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger_featured_news

Part of the Higher Education Commons

Recommended Citation
https://docs.rwu.edu/weekatroger_featured_news/520

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Week at Roger at DOCS@RWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Featured News Story by an authorized administrator of DOCS@RWU. For more information, please contact mwu@rwu.edu.
Leaving Their Mark: Internship Provides Students Work Experience on SECCM Labs Project

Construction management students Chris Bartorelli and Julia Pateman gain professional experience working with Shawmut Design and Construction on the SECCM Labs project.

Interns Chris Bartorelli ’19 (left) and Julia Pateman ’21 on-site for SECCM Labs project.

January 22, 2019  |  By Courtney Dell’Agnese ’19

BRISTOL, R.I. – As the grinding clash of massive steel beams coming together pierces the walls of the construction trailer, sophomore Julia Pateman examines shop drawings and material data submitted from subcontractors while senior Chris Bartorelli marks up floor plans with last-minute changes. While most students and staff aren’t allowed in the construction area, these two construction management majors were working with Shawmut Design and Construction on the SECCM Labs construction project during the fall semester.

As part of a “living laboratory” experience, RWU and Shawmut have partnered to create real-world learning opportunities for students during construction of a new laboratories building for the School of Engineering, Computing, and Construction Management (SECCM). And one of those unique opportunities includes working with Shawmut Design and Construction in paid internships.

As the first interns on this project, Pateman and Bartorelli collaborated with project manager Justin Bernard and project superintendent Greg Curran on everything from taking meeting minutes to writing the superintendent’s daily log and even going over project details with subcontractors. Throughout this first phase of the project, Bartorelli and Pateman have gained skills and knowledge in managing a large construction project from the ground up.
“I’ve gained experience in every single little aspect of the field from estimating to project management to being an onsite superintendent, so I’ve learned all the different niches and have a better idea of what I like to do,” said Bartorelli. “Then when I go into the real world, I know where I can excel and expertize.”

Pateman, who had just begun her sophomore year, says this experience has allowed her to apply what she’s learning in the classroom, which will put her a step ahead of other graduates when applying for jobs in the future.

“When going into job fairs and employers see a young person with two or three internships like this, they’re more eager to hire you,” Pateman said. “And especially as a woman in construction it brings even more benefits. I got invited to a ‘Women in Construction’ conference in January and I don’t think that would have happened had I not had internship experiences.”

Both students emphasize that receiving this type of in-depth, hands-on experience during their undergraduate careers has prepared them to step right into the field after graduation. However, they also give credit to the construction management faculty for guiding and supporting them along the way.

Taking advantage of the “living laboratory” right in their backyard, many construction management professors have incorporated the SECCM Labs project into their coursework, says Pateman. But they do more than just incorporate real-world experiences in their classroom. They actively help students gain their own work experience.
“I can’t pinpoint one specific professor because they’ve all been super helpful. Professor Brunnhoeffer, who recently retired, pushed me academically. Professor Emmer who I’ve had all three semesters now and would consider him a friend of mine. And of course, Professor Seymour who got me in contact with Shawmut to get this internship,” Pateman said. “There are many people in the program that are excited to teach you the ways of the land and eager to help you get jobs.”

Mentorship and support are just some of the many ways the construction management faculty help prepare students for success after RWU. Each semester they put together a specialized construction management career fair and frequently invite guest lecturers to speak to the students about potential internship and career opportunities.

“They very much want to see you succeed and will push you to your limit to perform your best,” Bartorelli said. “If you don’t have an internship, they will reach out to people they know and help you find one. They want to see all of us do at least one internship and get that work experience.”

As final exams marked the end of the fall semester, they left their own legacy on RWU’s campus. During the SECCM Labs steel “topping-off” ceremony, Pateman and Bartorelli watched the overhead crane lift the final steel beam – one which they added their signatures to, along with many RWU community members – to create the building’s frame, celebrating a beloved tradition in the construction industry and marking the end of a major phase and the beginning of another.

ACADEMICS  LIFE @ RWU  SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, COMPUTING, & CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT