

Tri Nguyen ('18) appreciated the hands on learning at Rowan

Tri Nguyen was born in Vietnam. His family moved to the United States in 2012 when Tri was 22. They moved to Pennsauken, NJ, where his father had family that had been in the US for many years. They came to provide a better education for their children. Tri's parents ran a family restaurant in Vietnam. Once they moved to the US, his parents traveled between the US and Vietnam, keeping the restaurant open until Covid forced its closure. Tri and his older brother and younger sister all started at Rowan around the same time.



Tri started to intern at Engineering Design Studio, LLC (EDS) with Charles Chelotti, who is also an Adjunct Professor at Rowan University. Charles was a great mentor and introduced Tri to Community Development throughout the three years during his time at Rowan. During his time at Rowan, Tri was very active with the ASCE and EWB student Chapters, volunteering to work on campus as well as local communities.

Tri completed his Rowan Civil and Environmental Engineering degree in 2018. He immediately joined Stantec in Mount Laurel, NJ. Tri specializes in Community Development, mostly industrial, commercial and warehouse site design. He obtained his Professional Engineer license in 2022.¹

Tri likes to hike in his free time. He is a past president of the South Jersey Branch of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).² Tri is still active with the South Jersey Branch of ASCE as a Board member. Tri participates in the ASCE Young Member Forum and volunteers in Camden introducing students to STEAM.³

I finished a degree in Finance in Vietnam just before we moved to the United States. My dream has always been to become an architect or engineer. I couldn't do that in Vietnam, but I saw a chance to do it here. Therefore, I decided to give myself another chance by doing college over. I went to Rowan because the Engineering program here has a good reputation.

I enjoyed college in the United States. My coursework in Vietnam was all papers and tests. I got more hands-on learning experience here. There was nothing like Rowan's Engineering Clinic⁴ in college in Vietnam. At Rowan, I got to apply the knowledge I learned to the real world.

I pursued Community Development because I was interested in seeing the community being improved and developed into better places through my works as well as others. Looking at all the finished projects and benefits they brought to the community is a great motivation for me.

Looking back, I could not do all of this without the support from all the CEE Department faculties. Professor Cleary was a great help to me during my time at Rowan. He encouraged me to apply for scholarships which reduced my financial burden. He was also the adviser of ASCE. In addition, I enjoyed volunteering with the Engineers Without Borders (EWB) chapter.⁵ I also did the Engineers on Wheels⁶ with Professor Jahan. I took a number of courses with Professor

Torlapati: Fluids, Water Resources, and so on. I like the way his classes are set up. Every time you learn a new topic, you apply what you learned to real world problems through a project or homework. The Senior Design class taught by practicing engineers was very useful for preparing for my career. We worked in a team to design a real-world project just like a Civil engineering consulting firm would. It was a well-spent time with my Senior Design group SMARTS, which were the initials of all the group members. I really enjoyed the Engineering Clinics, especially the flexibility of the junior and senior clinics. I even got to create my own clinic where we designed a green roof.⁷

I had a great time during my time at Rowan. I am proud to represent Rowan in my role of Past President of South Jersey Branch ASCE. I hope to see more alumni involved post-graduation to build a stronger and bigger Engineering Society in general as well as the South Jersey Branch in particular.

Based on an Interview with Jess W. Everett on 2024-3-22

1. The Professional Engineer license (PE) is a “standard recognized by employers and their clients, by governments and by the public as an assurance of dedication, skill and quality...Only PEs can sign and seal engineering drawings...To become a Licensed Professional Engineer, you must do four things: graduate from an accredited engineering program, pass the Fundamentals of Engineering (FE) exam, work with a professional engineer for four years, and pass the Principles and Practice of Engineering exam.”
2. The American Society of Civil Engineers is a professional body, founded in 1852, that represents members of the civil engineering profession worldwide. There are more than 500 chapters for professionals and students and over 150,000 members in 177 countries.
3. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics.
4. Engineering Clinic is a hallmark of Rowan University. Students take a Clinic class each semester, eight total. Many are interdisciplinary. All are hands-on. First-year Clinics focus on engineering’s place in society and fundamental engineering skills. Sophomore Clinics merge communication coursework with an engineering design experience and are team taught by engineering, writing arts, and rhetoric faculty. Junior and Senior Clinics have students work in teams on research or design projects, usually externally funded.
5. Engineers Without Borders-USA is a non-profit organization that helps communities around the world implement sustainable engineering projects, e.g., drill drinking water wells, treat drinking water, build schools or health clinics. Prof. Mehta founded an early student chapter at Rowan in 2004.
6. “The goal of the [Engineers on Wheels] is to get K-12 students interested in engineering at an early age and keep them interested. Through the projects they work on with Engineers on Wheels, students in area schools learn not only what engineering is but also how it can be fun and creative...Students and professors from the College of Engineering use their colorful, specially outfitted vans to provide students with that interactive experience.”
7. “Green roofs--also known as ‘vegetated roofs’ or ‘living roofs’--are ballasted roofs consisting of a waterproofing membrane, growing medium (soil) and vegetation (plants) overlying a traditional roof. Well-designed, engineered and maintained green roofs provide multiple environmental, social, economic and aesthetic benefits.” These can include stormwater reduction and lower heating/cooling bills. [Editor’s note: Professor Everett built a garden shed with a green roof in his backyard.]