

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Energy Internships Pay Off In the Classroom

In theory, paid summer internships are supposed to motivate students to improve their grades. The experience of working in the “real world” – even for a few weeks – should enable a student to better understand the direct relationship between academics and employability.

Theory became reality for 11 seniors at Hartford Public Schools’ Academy of Engineering and Green Technology who participated in the “Light Up Your Future” internship program last summer at Northeast Utilities and its subsidiaries, Yankee Gas and Connecticut Light & Power.

The academy’s Acting Principal Jack Baldermann reports that all eleven students elevated their averages by about a half grade, which is a significant accomplishment. Several of the students made honor roll for the first time while others increased their existing honors standing.

The student participants were: Hafsa Abdirizak, Branly Davila, Carlos Lopez, Yannick Harris, Michael Ashley, Shaquille Miller, Sita Mishra, Bien-Amie Sanon, Farrias Sanon, Brayan Villoria and Ramon Torres.

“The internship was a transformative experience,” Principal Baldermann said. “It improved the students’ attitude, their self esteem and their work.”

In addition to an introductory three days of online training, the students worked four eight-hour days per week for three additional weeks at \$11 per hour, learning the variety of jobs open to them in the energy distribution field.

NU trainers taught them how to fuse gas pipes, climb utility poles and operate heavy machinery such as bucket trucks, cranes, back hoes and forklifts. They also learned to read meters, detect power leaks and calculate the amount of energy needed to heat and power a home. Moreover, they met with Yankee Gas President Rod Powell on several occasions.

“Before this I knew nothing as to how our light and gas all worked,” said student-intern Ramon Torres wrote in a thank-you letter to NU officials. “Now I’m reading meters, knowing what’s under the ground when I walk over painted pavement and the best part is that I know how to operate a crane, back hoes and fork lift – and, of course, safety comes first.” He added that he would have loved to stay longer and learn more.

In addition to their hands-on training, the students are also earning elective credits toward their diploma for two 15-week online courses: “The Mathematics of Electricity” and “Renewable Energy and the Smart Grid.”

“I learned that math is more important than what I thought,” wrote Brayan Villoria, another student participant. “I strongly suggest this program for anyone who is interested in not just the money, but to be part of a great company and a great learning experience.”

The student internships were made possible through a grant from the federal Department of Energy to the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). The council then partnered with Northeast Utilities and the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA), which coordinated the program.

Last summer, students at the Academy of Engineering and Green Technology, whose primary corporate sponsor is the United Technologies Corp. (UTC), participated in 41 paid internships – about 10 percent of the school’s student body. Paid internships in the business world are a key component of the 500 high schools affiliated with the National Academy Foundation. Hartford Public Schools hosts three NAF academies, The Academy of Engineering and Green Technology, Pathways to Technology and High School Inc.

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