

## BRIAN RALSTIN TALKS ABOUT CO-OP



During the semesters I spent on co-op, I was able to experience and learn much more about the “world” after graduation than a normal four-year college experience allows. While on co-op I worked in two different departments, Road and Inspection, and on five main transportation projects. While in the Inspection Department I had the opportunity to supervise and inspect a bridge’s construction; and while in the Road Department, I helped to design and develop construction plans and specifications for: a bicycle/pedestrian trail, the reconstruction of a local collector road, a resurface project of multiple local streets, and accessibility and signalization updates of a local arterial highway. The inspection work, also known as QC/QA (quality control and quality assurance), consisted of being on site everyday with the contractor, ensuring that the plans were followed and that all materials used were as specified.

While working in the Road Department, my main responsibilities included: designing horizontal and vertical curves, performing drainage analysis on new construction, completing cost estimates, compiling design specifications, and drafting plan-sets. Besides the chance to learn more about the field of Civil Engineering, the prospect of being away from the normal university atmosphere of homework and tests was a pleasant addition to the experience. However, while there were no longer any homework assignments, I still experienced deadlines and learned how very important they are, and how much stress is involved in creating a final product that is paid for, and ultimately used, by the public. Nevertheless, the satisfaction I gained from the work I did every day and the knowledge that the public would one day use the products I was designing was more than enough inspiration to help me overcome the stresses and pressure of work.

Brian Ralstin, Civil Engineering, May '09 American Structurepoint, Inc.

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