



ACE Students Envision Amazon HQ2 for Chicago

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ACE student Liliane Tran presents vision for Amazon HQ2 to mayor Rahm Emanuel

***ACE Mentor
Program provides
opportunities for
high school
students to
design and
collaborate with
professionals***

Every year we look forward to spending time teaching and collaborating with enthusiastic and intelligent young leaders eager to break into the workforce through the ACE Mentorship Program. With Lendlease Construction and Thornton Tomasetti Structural Engineers as our partners, we join together to mentor a group of high school students who are interested in pursuing careers in Architecture, Construction, and Engineering. ACE is especially important to us because this nation-wide program places a special focus on recruiting minority and female students, groups that are significantly under-represented in these industries. We do a series of workshops and field trips aimed at providing the students the opportunity to participate and immerse themselves in as many industry related

activities as possible. All of this leads to a final project where they design an entry for the national Construction Industry Roundtable (CIRT) competition.

"I loved the idea that although we all came from diverse worlds, we all came together and put together the greatest presentation. Great minds are here for moments like that."

-Galilea Flores



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This year's CIRT competition entry included revitalizing the former Finkl Steel site in Chicago to accommodate Amazon's second headquarters: the Squiggle Hub. Chicago's Montgomery Ward Headquarters was the predecessor to the digital order catalogue, making Chicago the perfect place for Amazon's second home base. The students' project aimed to tackle social and economic issues that emerge with sudden population growth: influx of jobs and significant increases in rental rates. The students also brainstormed ways to connect local communities with the Chicagoland area at large both digitally and physically. The Squiggle Hub is envisioned by the students as an autonomous structure that curves back and forth to create continuous pockets of accessible green space along the river. Live, Work, and Play program areas are thoughtfully placed throughout the site to help promote a healthy work-life balance. The complex includes two stacked forms that rise and taper based on function, access, and context. For example, the Work area is raised to maintain views to downtown Chicago while the lower Play area tapers down to the ground to connect to an extension of the 606 Bloomingdale Trail Park and various public amenities such as a new Amazon Echo Library, an open-air amphitheater, and pop-up shop pavilions.



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The students presented the Squiggle Hub to the entire ACE Chicago community of students, mentors, and their families in Hermann Hall at Illinois Institute of Technologies on April 18, 2018. VDT's team won five scholarships, three Design Build participants, four internships, and one student won an all expense paid trip to participate in Cornell University's Introduction to Architecture Summer Program. VDT's students reconvened on June 26, 2018 and presented their project to Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Deputy Mayor Robert Rivkin, and the rest of the city of Chicago's team currently working to bring the real second Amazon Headquarters to Chicago.

"I learned that it not only takes planning, knowledge, and dedication in these fields, but also an incredible amount of teamwork to optimize a design. The ability to learn how to work with others in the pursuit of a primary goal is an important aspect that I learned from ACE."

-John Gaura



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Students
Received
Internships &
Design Build
Opportunities



6

Students
Received
Scholarships



8

Seniors
Pursuing ACE
Disciplines



Favorite Memories

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Get to know VDT's 2017-2018 ACE team and learn their favorite memory from the year.



Tia Pollard

Graduated from Hillcrest High School, pursuing Business Administration at DePaul University.

"The games we played and how we bonded as a family."



Michael Scott

Graduated from Morgan Park High School, pursuing Computer Engineering/Computer Science at DePaul University.

"Using Rhino with Hiba and all of the games our team played."



Jamie Kim

Senior at Jones College Prep, interested in Mechanical / Electrical Engineering.

"I was talking to one of the mentors about engineering and they went on a monologue about how great it is and how much fun and interesting their job is. It inspired me so much to hear how enthusiastic they were."



Maureen Davasse

Senior at Jones College Prep, interested in Civil / Structural Engineering.

"Learning about all of the different types of jobs and careers mentors have experienced."



Riley Cranston

Graduated from Jones College Prep, pursuing Civil/Sustainable Engineering at University of Iowa.

"Working at the architect's office in groups on the project, bouncing ideas off each other, having fun, and making jokes."



Christian Estrada

Senior at ACERO - Major Hector P. Garcia, interested in Mechanical Engineering.

"Our visit to the construction site lead by Lendlease."



Malique Bodie

Senior at Jones College Prep, interested in Architecture.

"Learning different computer programs like CAD and Rhino and getting to have creative input on the building design."



John Gaura

Graduated from Jones College Prep, pursuing Mechanical Engineering at Illinois Institute of Technology.

"I liked the activity where we drew cut fruit to understand architectural drawings."



Liliane Tran

Graduated from Walter Payton College Preparatory High School, pursuing Architecture at Yale University.

"I enjoyed the times when I worked closely with several mentors and peers on our project renderings. There were many smiles and laughs shared."

“ACE has allowed me to explore architecture in ways that were previously impossible for people my age. I am endlessly grateful for the ability to connect with inspiring peers and my ACE mentors, whom I never would have met otherwise.”

-Liliane Tran



Ariana Feliciano
Senior at Northside College Preparatory High School, interested in Architecture.

"Any conversation with Hiba about Carol B."



Nancy Villalobos
Graduated from Lane Tech College Prep, pursuing Architecture/Interior Design at Harold Washington College.

"Our ACE Instagram scavenger hunt was great. I learned a lot about different architectural features."



Jasmin Ayala
Senior at Lake View High School, interested in Architecture.

"Lego Lab, meeting new friends, the Instagram Scavenger Hunt, the Construction Site visit, basically most of the activities were my favorite memory. I had a great experience."



Martha Morales
Senior at Lake View High School, interested in Architecture and Engineering.

"Lego Lab, learning the design process, and becoming familiar with cool buildings from around the world."



Samantha Jimenez
Graduated from Thornton Township High School, pursuing Architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The activity where we used limited resources to build a house from scratch. It was challenging and fun. My group won because our house was the most structurally sound.



Galilea Flores
 Graduated from Jones College Prep High School, pursuing Civil / Environmental Engineering at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

"I feel that most of ACE was important and a great memory. I loved the idea that although we all come from diverse worlds, we all came together and put together the greatest presentation. Great minds are here for moments like that. I also loved using the programs with Ezra on constructing the structure to our building. Technology is literally my BFF."



Klara Ealey
 Senior at King College Prep, interested in Engineering or Architecture.

"The whole process with Team 5 was my best memory. I enjoyed everything we did."



Anchen Tong
 Senior at Northside College Preparatory High School, interested in Mechanical / Aerospace Engineering.

"Our heated debate over what font to use on our presentation slides."



Kadejah Bailey
 Graduated from ACE Tech Charter High School, pursuing Construction Management and Architecture at University of Illinois at Chicago.

"Meeting new people and learning more about construction."



Aryel Carter
 Senior at Gary Comer, interested in Engineering

"Playing games and ice breakers to learn about our teammates."



Gerardo Lopez
Senior at ACERO –
Major Hector P.
Garcia, interested in
Architecture.

"The building activity where we managed our time and resources to construct a paper building. This activity made me feel like I was part of a real firm and was actually working towards my dream coming true."



Alden Drake
Graduated from Lane
Tech College Prep,
pursuing
Construction
Management after
going to the Marines.

"Collaborating with the other students during the project while working to put together the budget for the building concept. Also, speaking with a mentor with past military experience was very valuable."



Crystal Juarez
Senior at ACERO –
Major Hector P.
Garcia, interested in
Architecture.

"I liked the first day, it all seemed like a dream come true. Walking late at night entering an office building as if I worked there. Heading up on the elevator, I was very nervous. But once I got into the room, it washed away. Seeing the office space and the environment of an architect, as well as the beautiful city through the window, all that was in me now was opportunity."



Sanjuana Martinez
Senior at ACERO –
Major Hector P.
Garcia, interested in
Architecture.

"The Instagram Scavenger Hunt because everyone was laughing and had a blast. Also the construction site visit because it was such an amazing experience to see how a building gets built, have real contractors explain the process to us, and get to wear all the safety gear"

Authors



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