

Meet our “Ask an Engineer” Panelists



Michelle Callahan, PE, LEED AP BD+C

Education: Master of Science in Civil Engineering from Northeastern University, 2011; Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering (Minor in Business Administration) from Northeastern University, 2008

Job: Project Manager, Nitsch Engineering

What that means: I provide sustainable site design and environmental permitting for public and private developments.

Interests: Baking, yoga, binge watching shows on Netflix, and hanging out with my husband Mike, three-year-old daughter Ceci, and baby Jake

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Thoughts on engineering: “The part I like most about engineering is that it’s a career that directly benefits society – I’m able to use my knowledge and problem-solving skills to make a difference in the world.”

How did you first become interested in engineering?: I really liked math and science, and a friend suggested I look into majoring in engineering.

Did you know any engineers before you went to college?: I have an uncle who’s an engineer, but only met him a few times.

What was it like to be a female student in engineering school?: Only 20% were women, so it was definitely noticeable that I was part of the minority.



Brittney Veeck, PE, LEED Green Associate

Education: Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Tufts University, 2013

Job: Senior Project Engineer, Nitsch Engineering

What that means: I work on teams to design site solutions, focusing on stormwater management and sustainable sites.

Interests: Running, traveling, baking, and playing board games

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Thoughts on engineering: “I like engineering because it is really cool to see a site transform from what it was before you were involved into what you designed.”

How did you first become interested in engineering?: One of my teachers my junior year of high school was a retired engineer. She was the first female engineer I had ever met (probably even the first engineer I had met period). She would describe her work as an engineer and it sounded more engaging than I would have expected. I never would have considered going into engineering without her.

Did you know any engineers before you went to college?: I knew two teachers who were retired engineers. One was a female structural engineer who I met my junior year of high school and one was a male materials engineer I met my senior year of high school.

What was it like to be a female student in engineering school?: I was lucky enough to go to an engineering school with a higher than average number of female students so I never felt like I was in the minority. I was friends with many of the male and female engineers in my class and we would work on problem sets and study together. It was a very collaborative environment and I never felt treated differently for being a woman. People were able to ask me for help on their work and I was able to ask them for help without feeling any judgement.



Paige Simmons, PE, LEED GA

Education: Bachelor of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Villanova University, 2015

Job: Project Engineer, Nitsch Engineering

What that means: I complete sustainable site designs including grading, stormwater, and utilities, while working with a multidisciplinary project team.

Interests: Skiing, hiking, going to the beach, and exploring new places

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Thoughts on engineering: “It is interesting to be an engineer because you are a part of helping society to grow and change as the world develops and the needs of society change. Every project is different based on the site constraints and the needs of the client.”

How did you first become interested in engineering?: Math and science were always my strong subjects in school. When deciding my major for college I wanted to pick a major where I could apply my math and science skills and have a defined career path, and engineering is where I landed.

Did you know any engineers before you went to college?: Nope

What was it like to be a female student in engineering school?: I had a very positive experience being a Civil and Environmental Engineering major at Villanova. The major at Villanova was about 40% females. I made a great group of close female friends that I would do my homework and study with, we are still close today. It was always a very collaborative group of students, including with the male students. I had both female and male professors and I felt that all the students were treated equally regardless of gender.



Anna Murphy, PE

Education: Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Northeastern University, 2015

Job: Project Engineer, Nitsch Engineering

What that means: I work with a team of engineers on civil engineering projects all over the Boston and Massachusetts focusing on grading, stormwater, utilities, and site design.

Interests: Running, music, reading, spending time with friends, spending time outside, and traveling

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Thoughts on engineering: “Civil engineering is really cool because you get to work on the technical aspects while also working with people to build something that can positively affect people’s daily lives in a tangible way.”

How did you first become interested in engineering?: I really liked math and science in high school and had a really good physics teacher who did a great job of showing us what kind of careers in math and science were available, including engineering.

Did you know any engineers before you went to college?: I knew I had adults in my life who were engineers, but I never knew very much about what they did until college.

What was it like to be a female student in engineering school?: There were definitely fewer women in my major than men, but it wasn’t too noticeable. I think the women in the civil engineering department definitely gravitated towards working together and supporting each other. I was also very involved in Engineers Without Borders, which was a large percentage female engineers and I found a lot of support from the other women in that group.



Deborah Danik, PE, CPESC, LEED AP BD+C

Education: Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2002

Job: Senior Project Manager, Nitsch Engineering

What that means: I manage a team of engineers to coordinate with other design consultants and the Owner the design and permitting for land development projects. We design everything outside the building: parking lots, walkways, stormwater management, utilities, and stuff underground that no one sees, but is very important to keep the site and building working.

Interests: Snowboarding, crocheting, trying new restaurants, and hiking

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Thoughts on engineering: “As an engineer, I work on something different every day with really cool people and we are designing projects that help the community.”

How did you first become interested in engineering?: Honestly, I didn’t really know what engineering was and I thought I wanted to be an architect, because I liked drawing in three dimensions. My guidance counselor suggested going into engineering first and then doing architecture as a master’s degree after. Once I got into the engineering classes I knew that it was the right place for me and I never thought about studying architecture again.

Did you know any engineers before you went to college?: My Uncle is a resident civil engineer, which means he helps inspect construction projects to make sure that what is constructed complies with the engineering design. I always knew he was an engineer, but growing up we never talked about his work, so I didn’t really realize what that meant, until I ended up working at the same engineering firm he did: Nitsch Engineering.

What was it like to be a female student in engineering school?: I had a blast in college and learned a lot. I graduated from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 2002, so the classroom looked a little different than it would today. I graduated with a couple other women, and there were two female professors in the Civil Engineering Department. Being one of the few females in my class actually helped me stand out a bit and I felt very supported and challenged as I worked my way through my Bachelor’s in Civil and Environmental Engineering degree.