



## Scholars Introduced to STEM Industry

The Governor's STEM Scholars held their Industry and STEM Conference at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. This conference gave the scholars a thorough introduction to STEM opportunities in the state's private sector.

The day began with a speech by Dr. Mikhail Rodkin, a Research & Development Council of New Jersey board member. As Vice President of Refining Catalysis Research and Analytics at BASF, Dr. Rodkin has considerable global academic and industrial experience, including in abating harmful emissions from mobile sources, and researching and developing innovative new tools for catalysis. He talked to the students about working for one of the world's largest chemical companies here in New Jersey.

Following Dr. Rodkin's speech, the scholars had the chance to visit one of three NJIT Innovation Laboratories. At these labs, academic researchers work with industry and government to create inventions that will improve our lives like helping the blind to see, finding a cure for cancer, and developing nanotechnology. These are also labs where Governor's STEM Scholars have gone to intern in years past.

Over lunch, the scholars were treated to a presentation by Ryan Blackmore, worldwide director of human resources at Janssen Pharmaceuticals, a Johnson & Johnson Company. Blackmore

**A student tries out a virtual reality device used to research restoring sight to the blind.**



**BASF Vice President and Council Board Member Dr. Mikhail Rodkin talks about being a chemical engineer.**

gave an informative and high-energy overview on how to network, develop a great professional presence, and make the most of an interview. In particular, he emphasized the importance of taking every opportunity to make a positive impression.

Following Blackmore's presentation, the scholars had the



chance to put his lessons to work in a unique professional setting called STEM Speed Networking. During this session, the scholars circulated around the room meeting with a dozen professionals from some of the state's top STEM companies, including BD, BMS, BASF, ExxonMobil, Celgene, Grafoid, Janssen, PSEG, and TE SubCom.

These are people who worked on nuclear submarines, who lay the undersea cables for modern telecommunications, who develop the drugs and medical devices that save our lives, and who create the chemistry for cleaner energy and a greener world. Each professional spoke about their own career paths and life within their companies. In addition, many were able to guide interested scholars to potential internship opportunities with their employers.

Feedback from the conference was overwhelmingly positive with many of the scholars enthusing that this was the best event of the year. After seeing their fellow scholars starting internships at Picatinny Arsenal and other Council partners, the number of students interested in having a STEM internship experience in New Jersey markedly increased.



**Above: Janssen Worldwide Head of Human Resources Ryan Blackmore gives the scholars an introduction to networking.**



**BD STEM Professional Jonathan Gabel shows medical devices he developed.**



**Top: PSEG Director and Council Board Member Jeffrey Stokes talks to the scholars.**



**Bottom: Stacy Test talks about the undersea cables she works on for TE SubCom.**



**Scholars and professionals do STEM Speed Networking at NJIT.**





STEM Scholars and professionals pose at the day's end.

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