

IBM Poughkeepsie Road Trip and Facility Tour

On Friday, November 8, 2018, fifteen Eastern students majoring or minoring in Business Information Systems or Computer Science, who are members of the ECSU BIS AITP Student Chapter traveled to IBM's Poughkeepsie location to meet with IBM employees and go on tours of the site.

The trip began with a tour of IBM's manufacturing floor but on the way there, students saw the water chilling system that is used to keep the buildings and mainframe computers at proper temperatures. The manufacturing floor is where the company's System Z mainframe computers and their components are made and assembled. As students learned, the "Z" in System Z stands for zero downtime, which is possible due to spare components and redundancies built into the mainframes to account for possible issues as well as the extremely solid robust operating system of the System Z. Students saw examples of these redundancies on a display computer drawer from a System Z13 as well as System Z 14's being assembled and stressed tested before being shipped to corporate clients of IBM.

The next stop was a lunch-and-learn session provided by IBM, with a New Hire Panel. ECSU students got the chance to chat with IBM employees who had been working fulltime at IBM for less than five years. These employees majoring in computer science, computer engineering and related information systems majors, now are in job positions, which widely vary from building systems to purposely breaking them to find issues. This was a unique opportunity for ECSU students to hear how these new employees used internships to smooth the transition from college to full-time careers. The second part of lunch featured a special guest, who is also from Connecticut. The students talked with this IBM employee about everything from ways to make computer systems crash, to advanced math and information systems knowledge for simplifying large amounts of data to the future directions of quantum computing.

The last stop for the ECSU AITP students on this trip was IBM's test floor. This is a 2+ acre room containing over 200 mainframes. On the tour of the test floor, students saw past, current, unreleased under research-development System Z mainframes. Students saw mainframes being tested in terms of both hardware and software to ensure there would be no issues for customers. This tour also featured the networking room where students saw unbelievable amounts of fiber optic cables that allow the mainframes in the test facility to run and communicate with each other.

This trip provided a unique educational experience for students interested in working in the biz-tech field to learn about mainframe computing, a growing career field full of awesome long-term professional possibilities for ECSU BIS and CS related students



