

Engineers Without Borders: **Students Inspired to Change the World**

The national organization of Engineers Without Borders (EWB) started as a small club with a handful of members in 2002. Today, it has over 12,000 members. That number now includes VCU students who want to help change the world.

EWB-USA, which has more than 350 projects ongoing in over 45 developing countries, works to bring basic needs for clean water, sanitation, energy and education to those who need it. The membership is made up of professionals and students of over 250 chapters across the country. Each chapter makes a five-year commitment to a community. The chapter will design and help implement solutions to the needs of that community. Local community members and non-governmental organizations are then trained to work and sustain the projects.

The work of EWB-USA inspired two VCU students to inquire about opening a VCU chapter. Jeffrey Stumb, an undergraduate senior in mechanical engineering (pictured first row, right), and Chris Holden, a PhD candidate for biomedical engineering (pictured first row, left), have worked together to bring EWB-USA to VCU's campus.

"There was nothing like this in the School of Engineering

at VCU," says Stumb, "and I wanted future students to be able to take advantage of the program." They currently have 18 members and hope this number rises once they start their first project and spread the word to the rest of the student body. Students from disciplines other than engineering are also encouraged to get involved.

For their first project, the students will collaborate with the James River chapter. There are several opportunities in Central America and the Caribbean for a gravity-fed water transportation project. After completing their first project, the chapter will be able to split into different teams, running multiple projects simultaneously in different parts of the world.

Stumb and Holden have high aspirations for the group's future. They hope to become a multi-disciplinary effort, including medical students, who would first visit a community and identify conditions to understand why people are getting sick; engineering students, who would be able to design projects to improve sanitation; and art students, who would be able to create visual aids to help educate community members on living a healthy lifestyle. The VCU chapter of EWB-USA gives engineering students another opportunity to inspire and change the world.

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