

Press Release

Students from “la Poly” win second place in the Solid Waste Design Competition at WASTECON ‘16

September 9, 2016

The Solid Waste Association of North America, SWANA, is the leading professional organization for the solid waste industry in North America, Canada and the Caribbean. The organization links professionals who are committed to the advancement of solid waste management and its handling as a resource through the employment of administrative, educational, operational and educational practices and activities.

From August 22nd to the 25th in Indianapolis, Indiana, SWANA celebrated its annual convention, better known as WASTECON '16. As part of the SWANA Young Professionals Group's efforts during WASTECON, various activities for YP's by YP's were offered and the Solid Waste Design Competition, SWDC, conducted on Monday August 22nd was among them.

“Meeting industry professionals with years of experience showed me what career opportunities are available.” – Kevin Colón

The competition focuses on solving a real-world problem that professionals may confront in the solid waste management field. This year's SWDC focused on landfill mining, an upcoming topic in the solid waste management field. Students were given a problem statement with various facts and figures of the landfill provided, with which an evaluation of the current state of the landfill must be completed with the purpose of comparing it with the possibility of mining the landfill. As part of their Project, the students had to complete a cost-benefit analysis and present their findings.

Of the five university teams that showed interest in participating, only three could submit their projects in time: Florida State University, University of Texas – Arlington and the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico (PUPR). After project evaluation, made on August 23rd 2016, the PUPR team got the second place in the competition.

“In this process I could highlight two main takeaways that my team and I could benefit the most from this experience; networking and learning.” – Luis Betancourt

The PUPR team conference experience included participating at various technical sessions and activities meant for Young Professionals, these included; networking events, workshops dedicated to the industry and various technical seminars.

“Motivating words, support and enthusiasm were abundant among those who spoke with us. The YPs made our experience during the conference gratifying, informative and fun.” – Mónica Rodríguez, SC

The SWANA Caribbean chapter and the Environmental Engineers Institute (IIAM) are very proud and recognize the excellent performance by the PUPR students, being the first delegation from Puerto Rico to participate in this activity. We hope this was the first of many Puerto Rican delegations to compete in the Solid Waste Design Competition.



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“ “[Industry Professionals] saw great potential in us, and being reassured by them gives us inspiration to continue to grow, challenge ourselves and give the best we have to offer. [...] This experience gave us exposition that we didn’t expect, not only in our country, but also in the United States.” – Natalie Giró, SC

The students wish to express their gratitude towards all the organizations that provided much needed support, particularly to René Rodríguez P.E. and his organization, EC Waste, for their support during the project’s development.

