CSU day shines a light on opportunities in engineering

Exploration day shows hands-on projects

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Future engineers at CSU have a range of opportunities to apply what they learn, like building a steel bridge or creating a backpack baby incubator.

"I've always been really hands-on," said civil-engineering student Tony Grasso, 19, adding that his father's basement is "full of old electronics" and wood that he used for building things.

He explained the excitement of building a functional bridge to a group of prospective students and their families at a lab in the engineering building at Colorado State University during Engineering Exploration Day on Saturday.

Meanwhile, professor Kevin Lear spoke to a classroom full of people about opportunities in biomedical engineering. He showed a photo of a baby doll fastened vertically in an incubator known as a neo-natal transport unit, a senior design project for transporting infants on one's back.

"There are places where it's hard to transport a pre-born infant to the hospital," Lear said.

CSU's high-ranking veterinary school, he said, provides an especially good opportunity for biomedical engineering students.

"Can you imagine an MRI machine you can put a horse inside?" he said. "We have one."

While in class, engineering students learn equations and

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Tony Grosso, 19, a civil engineering junior at CSU, explains to prospective students and their families at Engineering Exploration Day the opportunity to build a steel bridge as an extracurricular project. ROBERT ALLEN/THE COLORADOAN
book work, but Grasso said the exciting part is applying these to a situation.

The junior from Centennial came to CSU because of its high rankings in civil engineering and the proximity of Fort Collins to the mountains — and also for the Engineering Research Center at the CSU Foothills Campus west of town.

"Being there is like a dream, almost," he said.

The exploration day, which occurs twice per year, also gives prospective students an idea of where their education can take them.

Brad Reisfeld, associate professor with CSU’s Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering, said graduates moved on to work for employers such as Anheuser-Busch, Lockheed Martin, Frito Lay and the U.S. Air Force.

Chemical engineers’ base salary the first six years out of school averages $73,804, going up to $107,856 by 15 years. He said enrollment in his department is increasing, with about 75 freshmen this year.

Aaron Hines, 17, a junior at Rocky Mountain High School in Fort Collins, said he’s already got some college credit through an advanced-placement chemistry class, but he’s exploring his options.

"I’m kind of just surveying and seeing if I like engineering," he said.