

Architecture students mentor high school designers

November 17, 2015 11:30 AM Barri Bronston
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Freddie Dickinson, right, a mentor for Project Pipeline and a practitioner at CTA Architecture, and Braham Berg, second from left, Tulane architecture student, guide St. Augustine High School students (from left) Darius Joseph, Christian Octave and Charles Jones through the design of a chair. After exploring joints and form through modeling, the group discussed how the ideas could be combined in terms of scale, form, joints and structure. (Photo by Linda Reineke, Riverview Photography)

Charette ? it's defined by Merriam-Webster as the "intense final effort made by architectural students to complete solutions to a given architectural problem in an

allotted period of time.”

For seven St. Augustine High School students attending the recent [EdSpaces National Conference](#) at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, that meant figuring out how to design and fabricate a functional, full-sized chair conducive for an educational setting.

They had four hours to complete the challenge, which might have taken four days had it not been for the mentorship of students from the Tulane University [School of Architecture](#) and local architects. The mentors included Braham Berg, American Institute of Architects (AIA) liaison for the Tulane chapter of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) and student representative on the charette organizing committee.

“The St. Augustine students had no design background and had never built a chair before,” Berg said. “Thanks to the guidance of Joey D’Arco, DiA Biagioni, Kyle Novak and Arielle Scher, the charette accomplished its objectives ? the students had built two chairs and two leaders were speaking about their process to attendees like professionals.”

The students from St. Augustine, led by Angelo Bagneris and Christian Octave, spent the first half of the charette coming up with ideas, then sketching and building small models with guidance from their mentors. The building of the chairs came next, and while there were challenges, Bagneris and Octave were pleased with the results.

“I liked being able to come up with an idea and work on that idea with the mentors,” Bagneris said. “And it was cool getting to share this with a large group of professionals.”

The charette was made possible through a partnership between the AIA New Orleans, AIA Committee on Architecture for Education, EdSpaces, AIAS Tulane University and the Louisiana Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects" [Project Pipeline](#), which advocates for diversity in architecture and design through community engagement and mentorship.