



RJ Franzen BS, MS '25

BS in Chemical Engineering; MS in Chemical Engineering with a concentration in Advanced Process Engineering



Why did you choose to study at WPI?

I chose to study at WPI because it emphasizes project-based learning and prepares students for their careers. The hands-on experience through real-world projects fosters creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, which thoroughly prepares students for their future careers. My Major Qualifying Project (MQP), "Recycling Used Canola Oil from Morgan Dining Hall into 3D Printing Resin," allowed me to apply my chemical engineering knowledge and skills to a relevant and real-world project to leave a positive impact on the world.

How are you involved with the WPI community?

Over the past few years, I've served as the Phi Sigma Kappa president and vice president of new member education Interfraternity Council (IFC) vice president of risk management, , Order of Omega vice president, Students Mentoring Active Responsibility Together (SMART) president, and The Alliance Campus Affairs officer. I am also an active member of Omicron Delta Kappa.

Like many, I initially had no intention of joining

Hometown

Allentown, NJ

Mentor/Advisor

- [Emily Perlow](#)
- [Stephen Kmiotek](#)
- [Alex Maag](#)
- [Eric Young](#)

Achievements

- 2024 John Salvo Award Winner – Graduating Phi Sigma Kappa Member of the Year
- 2024 WPI CORE Program of the Year Award Winner – SMART's Alcohol Education Trainings for FSL New Members

Interests

Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL). I went through the fall recruitment process as a first-year student simply because my friends were doing it, but I was surprised to find a community in Phi Sigma Kappa that was right for me. FSL at WPI brings together a tight-knit community that fuels friendships, personal development, and unforgettable experiences. Joining was one of the best decisions I've ever made.

The amount of academic, social, professional, and philanthropic opportunities generated by FSL is unparalleled. I've discovered a supportive community that aligns with my values and witnessed first-hand its capacity to foster personal growth, community engagement, and impactful philanthropy. This past year, my chapter won Alpha Phi's Heartthrob philanthropy event by raising over \$6,000 for the Alpha Phi Foundation and women's heart health. The total amount raised was just under \$10,000.

What's your favorite thing about WPI?

My favorite part about WPI is the tight-knit community both socially and academically. I've formed great friendships across the Chemical Engineering Department, FSL, and in my other extracurricular organizations that will extend well beyond my time at WPI. Furthermore, with a low student-to-faculty ratio, I've interacted closely with professors and received individualized attention and support as needed. Professors Kmiotek, Maag, and Young in the Chemical Engineering Department have all been excellent professors, advisors, and, most importantly, friends. Their genuine care and support helped me navigate complex and challenging academic projects and they even offer career advice when asked.

Do you have a faculty or staff mentor?

Mackenzie Lipman, formerly in the Student Activities Office, was the IFC advisor while I was Phi Sigma Kappa president and IFC vice president of risk management. She also advised Order of Omega while I was vice president and helped me restart

- Participating in Interfraternal tournaments and events
- Video games - competitive Pokemon, Ace Attorney, and Zero Escape
- Sports - Philadelphia Eagles, 76ers, and Phillies
- TV shows - Avatar: The Last Airbender, Riverdale, and Pretty Little Liars

Campus Activities

- Phi Sigma Kappa, President (2022) & Vice President of New Member Education (2021)
- Interfraternity Council (IFC), Vice President of Risk Management (2023)
- Order of Omega, Vice President (2023)
- Omicron Delta Kappa, Member
- Students Mentoring Active Responsibility Together (SMART), President (2023)
- The Alliance, Campus Affairs Officer (2024)
- American Institute of Chemical Engineers, Member



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SMART. She constantly challenged me to be great and helped me navigate through complex and challenging issues I faced. Additionally, she helped me grow into the leader I am today, specifically in the development of my problem-solving, decision-making, and critical-thinking skills. Mackenzie always went above-and-beyond her responsibilities, and I could not have accomplished everything I did without her.

How has WPI's project-based learning influenced your education?

Project-based learning aligns with how I learn best ^¾ practical examples that are relevant, engaging, and interactive. For instance, my chemical engineering capstone design project was designing a groundwater treatment system to remove PFAS (aka “forever chemicals”) from contaminated water using a granular activated carbon (GAC) absorber system. Working in a team, we identified the essential unit operations, utilities, reactants, products, and safety precautions necessary for efficient and secure PFAS removal. From there, we conducted thorough mass and energy balance calculations and created detailed process flow diagrams to represent the treatment system visually. This hands-on approach mirrors the exact work one does in the chemical engineering industry and has vastly prepared me for my career.

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8:30 AM - 9:30 AM	9:30 AM - 11:00 AM	11:00 AM - 12:00
Wake up, eat breakfast, and head to campus	Work on cleaning my resin samples in Goddard Hall Labs with my MQP team	PM Relax and eat lunch

Discover more about WPI students

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