

Teague Nall and Perkins

Engineering a winning team

It's a good thing Sol Stigall took such detailed notes as an engineering student at UTA.

He still references them today as a graduate engineer on the hydraulics and hydrology team at Fort Worth-based Teague Nall and Perkins. And Stigall is not the only worker at the company with a handle on that knowledge.

Of TNP's 39 engineers, 14 have engineering degrees from UTA, including two with master's, and five are enrolled in graduate school there. Two of the company's corporate officers and four of its principals are alumni.

"It's fun working with all the UTA alums," said Stigall, who earned his bachelor of science in civil engineering in 2000. "Sometimes we reminisce about the UTA engineering program and how rigorous it was at times. Of course, most of the classes we remember are linked to an undergraduate professor who we'll never forget."

It's no coincidence that TNP has so many UTA graduates. The firm recruits at the University, said Gary Teague, a principal who earned a bachelor of science in civil engineering in 1966, when the school was Arlington State College.

"We haven't seen any negatives," he said. "They come out with a good engineering background. We pick those who think for themselves. It was a good education for me, and it seems to be the same for those we've hired over the years."

Stigall, who is currently taking graduate classes at UTA, was able to jump directly from the classroom to the office.

"Key engineering design principles that I use today can be traced back to my undergraduate courses at UTA," he said. "I often refer back to my textbooks and notes from previous undergraduate and graduate courses when working on design and analysis projects."

TNP is a civil engineering consulting firm, working primarily for cities, school districts and government groups. Typical projects include street and highway work; drainage, water and sewer systems; and site development, parks and golf courses.

The company not only has a reputation throughout North Texas for quality engineering consulting services, but also for its corporate culture and work atmosphere. Open-door policies, on-site amenities and a variety of company events have led to TNP's being ranked one of the best small businesses to work for in the Metroplex and a top 50 civil engineering firm to work for nationally, according to a trade publication.

Stigall likes the "fun atmosphere" that he says fosters loyalty and commitment. TNP has a workout facility complete with showers and locker rooms, an outdoor basketball court—home to the company's annual three-on-three tournament—and two table-tennis tables.

"There's nothing like blasting a ping-pong ball at your project manager to help you clear your mind," he said.

Alumnus Scott Wilhelm, another of the firm's principals, loves the



TNP's work-hard, play-hard philosophy often involves basketball games during lunch. More than a third of the firm's engineers are UTA educated.

stress relief he gets from "dunking on co-workers" during lunchtime basketball games. Wilhelm, who earned civil engineering bachelor's and master's degrees in the 1990s, says UTA was an ideal place for him to attend class while working full time.

TNP management puts on an annual golf tournament, tailgate parties, company picnics and a Christmas party.

"You spend more time at work than in any other aspect of your life," Teague said. "If you're going to spend that much time there, it needs to be as enjoyable as possible. There's no reason you can't have a place you enjoy and feel appreciated."

The company also trumpets a competitive salary and benefits package and a bonus program. And the work is stimulating, Stigall said.

"TNP's graduate engineers are given opportunities to really spread their wings on a variety of design projects," he said. "During my 3 1/2 years with the firm, I've had the opportunity to work on many types of projects, including subdivision design, water distribution system modeling, infrastructure reconstruction, hydraulic modeling, environmental permitting and roadway and drainage design."

Which makes all of those notes he took come in handy. ■

— DANNY WOODWARD