

2025–2026 CRASH Project Student Evaluation Report

The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey (BIANJ) administers the CRASH Project (College Roads and Safety Habits), a statewide peer-to-peer transportation safety program funded through the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety. The CRASH Project challenges college students to develop and implement transportation safety campaigns on their campuses and within their surrounding communities. Through education, outreach, and student leadership, participants address issues such as distracted driving, impaired driving, speeding, pedestrian safety, and other transportation safety concerns.

The 2025-2026 school year was the 4th year of the CRASH Project. 10 colleges (community colleges and universities) from 9 counties of the state participated in the program. As a prerequisite for participating, the colleges signed a participation agreement which stated that they would participate, to the best of their ability, in an evaluation of the CRASH Project. BIANJ CRASH Project technical support staff informed the faculty advisors and students of the evaluation at their technical support visits and in emails to the faculty advisors and students. The online student evaluation was posted in April, and emails went out to the faculty advisors and students throughout the month reminding the students to complete the evaluation. The survey assessed student perceptions of the program, levels of engagement, behavioral changes related to transportation safety, and overall satisfaction with their experience.

Program Participation

Student leaders and team members were encouraged to complete the evaluation survey following the completion of their campus campaigns.

A total of 21 students completed the evaluation survey, representing the following institutions:

- Rutgers University–New Brunswick (7)
- Stevens Institute of Technology (5)
- UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ (4)
- Stockton University (2)
- Bergen Community College (1)
- Passaic County Community College (1)
- Kean University (1)

General Conclusions from the Student Evaluation Surveys

Overall, the results indicate that the CRASH Project continues to be an effective peer-to-peer transportation safety initiative at the college level. Students reported high levels of satisfaction with their experience, strong support from BIANJ staff, and meaningful opportunities to engage their peers and campus communities in conversations about transportation safety.

Students overwhelmingly felt that participation in the program increased awareness of safe driving behaviors and positively influenced both drivers and passengers on their campuses.

General Findings

Increased Awareness

- **100% of respondents** agreed or strongly agreed that the CRASH Project provided students with opportunities to discuss the importance of safe driving on their campus.
- Students consistently reported that transportation safety became a more visible topic among their peers as a result of campaign activities.

Community Safety

- **90% of respondents** agreed or strongly agreed that they and their friends became safer drivers because of the CRASH Project.
- **95% of respondents** agreed or strongly agreed that they and their friends became safer passengers because of the CRASH Project.

Positive Student Experience

Students reported positive interactions with fellow team members, faculty advisors, campus partners, and BIANJ staff. Survey responses reflected a strong sense of accomplishment, leadership development, and pride in creating programs that benefited their campus communities.

Students also indicated that:

- Team collaboration was strong.
- Resources provided by BIANJ were helpful.
- Program activities successfully engaged students and community members.
- The JerseyDrives website served as a useful resource throughout the project.

Behavioral Impact

Survey data suggests that participation in the CRASH Project positively influenced student transportation safety behaviors, including reduced phone use while driving, increased focus behind the wheel, improved pedestrian safety practices, greater compliance with seatbelt use, and stronger attitudes against impaired driving.

- **Phone Use While Driving:** Students reporting that they rarely use their phone while driving increased from 43% before the program to 80% after participation.
- **Driving Focus:** Students reporting they always keep their eyes on the road increased from 50% before the program to 75% after the program.
- **Speeding:** Students reporting that they always or sometimes drive over the speed limit decreased from 28% before participation to 15% afterward.

- **Seatbelt Use (Passenger):** Students who always wear a seatbelt as a passenger increased from 84% to 95%.
- **Perception of Cannabis Use While Driving:** Students who indicated it is never acceptable to use cannabis while driving increased from 95% before participation to 100% after participation.
- **Pedestrian Safety:** Students reporting they always follow safe walking habits increased from 40% to 60%.
- **Stopping for Pedestrians:** Students reporting they always stop for pedestrians in crosswalks increased from 70% to 85%.

Key findings include:

- Students reported increased awareness of distracted driving and the dangers associated with phone use behind the wheel.
- Students indicated stronger commitment to safe driving practices and transportation safety advocacy.
- Participants reported increased conversations about safe driving among friends, classmates, and community members.
- Students expressed greater awareness of pedestrian safety and the importance of sharing the road responsibly.

Open-Ended Feedback Themes

Students identified several recurring transportation safety concerns affecting their campuses and communities.

Biggest Transportation Safety Issues Identified

Common themes included:

- Distracted driving
- Speeding
- Impaired driving
- Pedestrian safety concerns
- Unsafe driver behaviors around campus
- Limited awareness of transportation safety issues among college students

Best Ways to Address These Issues

Students most frequently recommended:

- Continued transportation safety education and awareness campaigns

- Peer-to-peer outreach initiatives
- Increased campus and community engagement events
- Stronger enforcement of traffic laws
- Partnerships with local law enforcement and community organizations
- Expanded use of social media and digital outreach

Student Feedback on Program Strengths

Students frequently cited the following as highlights of their CRASH Project experience:

- Connecting with fellow students and community members
- Hosting educational events and tabling activities
- Creating social media campaigns
- Raising awareness about transportation safety issues
- Developing leadership, communication, and organizational skills
- Working collaboratively toward a meaningful cause

Conclusion

The 2025–2026 CRASH Project Student Evaluation demonstrates that the program continues to provide meaningful transportation safety education and leadership opportunities for college students throughout New Jersey. Students reported increased awareness of safe driving practices, positive behavioral influences among peers, and strong engagement with transportation safety initiatives on their campuses.

The evaluation findings suggest that the CRASH Project successfully empowers college students to become transportation safety advocates while fostering safer driving, passenger, and pedestrian behaviors within their communities. Feedback from participants will continue to guide future program improvements and strengthen the impact of this statewide peer-to-peer transportation safety initiative.