

Dr. Greg Wheeler
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Dr. Wheeler,

I went to work for the Industrial Assessment Center (IAC) to get practical engineering experience. I got much more out of the IAC than what I had expected. Throughout my time there I gained valuable experience dealing with people, collecting data, analyzing problems, using computers, writing technical papers, and working in groups. I also developed many lasting friendships. As an added benefit, the IAC played vital roles both in funding my education and in helping me land an excellent career position in the energy management field. In short, nothing from my graduate study at Oregon State has influenced my life more positively or profoundly than my experience as a student worker at the IAC.

Over two years, I visited some two dozen manufacturing facilities as part of an IAC assessment team. I learned to talk with plant personnel, vendors, and utility company representatives in order to convey our mission and gather input on possible efficiency improvements. A variety of experiences helped me learn what questions to ask, what data to collect, how to collect the data, and what to do with the data once it was collected. Sometimes I failed to ask the right questions and collect the right data. You and others at the IAC encouraged me to improve my skills and learn and grow from my mistakes.

In the report writing and editing processes, I practiced lots of engineering calculations and, through countless editing processes, polished my technical writing skills. I also became proficient in a wide variety of computer programs and utilities. When analyzing plant energy uses, I was always encouraged to explore new ideas for possible energy savings and try different approaches to solving problems. The work was both challenging and exciting, and, though frustrating at times, the lessons I learned were well worth the challenges of learning them.

Perhaps the most valuable experience I gained from the IAC was that of working in a group with other prospective engineers. Through open discussion in the IAC's casual atmosphere, I was able to talk through potential assessment recommendations and savings calculations with my coworkers. This free exchange of ideas often led to creative solutions and strong friendships.

The IAC enabled me to improve my analytical skills and offer practical experience to potential employers. Upon graduating, I was offered several positions in the energy management industry. I ended up accepting a great position at a nearby municipal electric utility. I would not have been offered the job without IAC experience.

Thank you for hiring me to work at the IAC and teaching me so much about energy conservation. By teaching me practical skills and analysis techniques, you have made a valuable contribution to my knowledge base and my future. You have challenged me to find ways to save energy, to calculate solutions, and to communicate clearly and effectively. I am grateful for your patience and understanding through it all. Your program is valuable to both industry and students and has made an immense impact on my career and my life.

Sincerely,

Greg Kelleher

Masters graduate, summer 2001