U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

Industrial Assessment Centers Alumni Case Study

Brandon Peery, Syracuse University, 2011

"Hands down, the IAC is the best thing that has happened in my life to this point. It has been nothing but a substantial positive force. That is why I am so grateful and want to give back to the program in any way I can. I love coming back and interacting with students at the Lead Student Meeting. I cannot thank the program enough for the opportunities it has given me."

IAC Roots

When Brandon Peery arrived at Syracuse University, he knew he wanted to study mechanical engineering to build cars or maybe rockets. The thought of energy efficiency never entered his mind. Brandon was introduced to energy engineering by Fred Carranti, the former Director of the IAC, who discussed the program during an introductory engineering class. Brandon was immediately interested and began seeking an opportunity to work with the Syracuse University IAC.

Throughout his freshman and sophomore years, Brandon continued to communicate to Fred Carranti his interest in the program. At the end of his sophomore year, when Brandon asked for a recommendation from Mr. Carranti for an unrelated internship, he learned that a space had opened up and he was invited to join the IAC. Brandon elected the IAC over the internship, and he ultimately remained with the program for his junior and senior years, as well as during his graduate work in Engineering Management. Out of his work with the IAC grew a real sense of satisfaction in quantifying actual energy savings and interacting with companies, and thus began what has now become a successful career as an applied energy engineer. According to Brandon, it was the IAC that allowed him to gain access to an industry that is now experiencing tremendous growth.

Brandon Peery, IAC Lead Student Alumnus, Syracuse University

Courtesy of Brandon Peery

Brandon Peery preparing for a site visit and assessment

Courtesy of CHA Companies, Inc.

When asked about his time in the IAC, Brandon emphasized how being a part of the IAC and seeing applications in action during an assessment made the rest of his collegiate work easier. Throughout his undergraduate work in Mechanical Engineering and his graduate work in Engineering Management, the hands-on experience he gained by performing assessments taught him how IAC assessments applied in the real world, as well as in the classroom. Just as important as the technical expertise he gained, IAC assessments also taught Brandon how to effectively communicate with people. Brandon notes; "The IAC taught me how to communicate with all levels of people from plant managers and other engineers to CEOs, CFOs and everyone in between." This ability to communicate is what sets IAC alumni apart from other engineers.

Brandon participated in over 40 assessments during his IAC tenure, and notes with a tremendous sense of achievement that most of those assessments

"I've known Brandon since he was a freshman here at Syracuse. He became a valuable member of the IAC team, made important contributions to the mission, and quickly moved into a leadership and mentoring role. Brandon is a fine example of what an IAC is supposed to produce." — *Fred Carranti, former IAC Director, Syracuse University*

Identified savings that helped companies cut their bottom line energy costs instead of cutting jobs.

While each assessment was important in its own right and offered many valuable lessons, the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive energy study at ORNL stands out in Brandon's mind as one of the great learning experiences of his IAC tenure. This study, led by Schneider Electric, and completed in 2009, was a customized in-depth study designed to identify cost-effective, energy saving and resource reducing strategies throughout the lab.

Career Highlights

After graduating, Brandon noted how easy it was for him to find an energy engineering position. He stated confidently that, "because of the reputation of the program and all it taught me, it was so simple for me to get a job after leaving the IAC." During his first and only job interview with CHA -- his current employer -- "only about 15 minutes of the 45 minute interview was a discussion of technical topics. The other 30 minutes was chatting about food, skiing, etc. At the end of the interview they told me an offer was forthcoming. I was hired because of my IAC experience."

At CHA, Brandon continues to do the work that he became so passionate about at the IAC. In his current position, Brandon does quite a bit of work for NYSERDA, the state energy program in New York. He provides technical reviews for NYSERDA, reviewing or performing calculations to quantify the energy impacts of various projects. He also assesses the value of prospective projects and advises NYSERDA as to whether or not the specified project should be pursued and at what level of investment. Brandon also performs screening assessments, single day assessments similar to the ones he performed at the IAC and investment grade energy audits.

"Brandon's IAC experience really allowed him to hit the ground running once he started with CHA in 2011. He already had a good handle on key concepts related to our industry, including a basic understanding of most mechanical systems that we deal with. He also was aware of the typical energy conservation measures we evaluate as part of our audits. Brandon has continued to progress nicely while here at CHA and provides an excellent example for other entry-level engineers that we hire to follow."--*Mike Masny, CHA Companies, Inc.*

Focus on the Future

Moving forward, Brandon plans to pursue his CEM and PE license. He has a focus on business development and possibly project management as well as continuing with his technical work. In the future, Brandon hopes to include more client interaction and new client development in his job duties.

Brandon believes his IAC experience was crucial to the development of his ability to discuss technical as well as business aspects with potential CHA clients. He loves bridging the gap between technical and business communication and being able to do that effectively is what has allowed him to pursue his passions.

A Strong Energy Portfolio for a Strong America

Energy efficiency and renewable energy will mean a stronger economy, cleaner environment, and greater energy independence for America. Working with a wide array of state, community, industry, and university partners, the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) invests in a diverse portfolio of energy technologies. The Advanced Manufacturing Office (AMO) within EERE is the lead government program working to increase the energy efficiency of the U.S. Industrial Sector.

ABOUT THE IAC PROGRAM:
A program area of AMO, the Industrial Assessment Centers (IACs) provide eligible small- and medium-sized manufacturers with no-cost energy assessments. Additionally, the IACs serve as a training ground for the next-generation of energy savvy engineers.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

EERE website:
www.eere.energy.gov

AMO website:
www.eere.energy.gov/industry/

IAC student forum website:
www.iacforum.org

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