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Student Questionnaire: Andrew Arsenault

Student Life, Student Questionnaires



NAME:
Andrew Arsenault

GRADUATION YEAR:
2021

Q: How did you discover the University of Maine Pulp and Paper Foundation and what attracted you to it?

A: I discovered the Pulp and Paper Foundation during my junior year of high school. What attracted me to the foundation was the opportunities that they provide their students. As a member of the Foundation, you are exposed very early on in your college career to numerous experiences that many of my peers did not have.

Q: How did you know the program was the right fit for you?

A: I knew the program was a good fit because of the people. Everyone in the Foundation wants what is best for the students and they are willing to go above and beyond in order to achieve it. In addition, I saw a lot of myself in many of the students who are involved in the program.

Q: What was top of mind when considering the program?

A: My largest concern was the opportunities that I would have as a result of being a member. Another consideration was the location. I grew up in Maine and intend to work and raise a family here and being able to receive a strong education and remain in the state I love made the decision very easy. Also the tuition assistance that they provide

removes a significant amount of the financial hurdle of attending college. The Foundation has granted me the opportunity to graduate free of debt.

Q: Tell us about your experience at the Consider Engineering summer program.

A: I attended the Considering Engineering Program in the summer of 2016. At the time I was on the fence as to what field I wanted to pursue post-graduation. I attended the program to learn more about the opportunities that exist in engineering as well as to experience the UMaine campus. I was amazed at all the different facets of engineering including those within the pulp and paper field. Once I returned home from the experience, I had decided that I wanted to become an engineer!

Q: What is your favorite thing about UMPPF?

A: My favorite thing about the Foundation is the people. Without the people there is no Foundation. They work incredibly hard to ensure that their students' needs are being met. They coordinate numerous networking events, interview workshops, and seminars to prepare their students for a career in the pulp and paper industry.

Q: What do you think are common misconceptions about the industry that you were surprised to learn weren't true?

A: A common criticism of the pulp and paper industry is that it is dying, which is not true. We are in a time of change for the industry and companies are innovating to lead the charge and ensure the future of pulp and paper.

Q: Describe your co-op experience.

A: I spent the summers following my first and second years working for The Fitch Company. Fitch is an electrical, process controls, and instrumentation consulting firm. Many of their clients are within the pulp and paper industry and they were a wonderful company to work for. I was never treated as a stereotypical intern and had the opportunity to really get my feet wet and learn a lot about engineering and the pulp and paper field.

This past summer I decided to seek out a different experience to grow more perspective on what opportunities there are in the field. I was at Proctor & Gamble and really enjoyed my experience there. I really enjoyed the fast-paced environment of a manufacturing facility. I had some hesitations about seeking out a new experience, but I am very thankful that I did!

Having both co-op experiences helped me in making my decision to accept a full-time position with The Fitch Company that will start after graduation this spring!

Q: If you could talk with a graduate of the program, what would you want to know?

A: I would want to know if they are happy in their roles throughout the pulp and paper industry. Happiness and a positive work/life balance are some of my key concerns so it would be nice to learn about their experiences.

Q: If one of your friends were considering UMPPF, what would you tell them?

A: Do it. You will not regret your decision and you will be so much further ahead of your peers as a result. The Foundation has prepared me well for life after college and they are such a valuable resource that more students need to take advantage of.

Q: How do you feel about your future in the industry?

A: I feel that my future in the industry is bright. We are in a unique time where many of the current workforce is aging out and we are the generation that needs to step up and fill their shoes. We are in high demand right now and I look forward to what the future holds.

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