

2016

{WIN•tern•ships!}

2nd PLACE

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Value – Beyond the Monetary Perception

My internship was at an industrial chemical processing plant that manufactures plastics in Trinseo, MI. Working as an efficiency improvement engineer provided me with more than experience in a career field; it provided me with a sampling of the work I could expect in the field.

This impacted my career goals by helping me to understand what type of work is most satisfying to me. For example, I loved having the opportunity to develop my own projects and test out theories. It was

extremely rewarding to be able to present my findings, which would result in a savings of \$6,500/year/change due to energy savings associated with reducing the fan size required to transport their product through the pipelines efficiently.

I also loved being able to work on smaller projects with

different departments, so that I learned how inter-related they all are. I learned that I enjoy independent work that results in measurable benefits to the company. This type of work validates my worth, not just to the company, but to me. I want to know that I provide enough value to cover my own salary. After this internship, I realized that I want to provide value to a company and my new goal is to have a personal payback period of less than 5 years for savings-related projects.

More importantly, I learned that this job scared me; I didn't like working in an environment that could become explosive literally. It made me uncomfortable knowing that a mishap at the plant could level the whole city. I learned that I want a less dangerous career path located in California, close to my family. Essentially, I learned that there is value in other aspects of my potential career and that money wasn't the only decided factor I would consider for future careers.