Hunter Cole

Personal Narrative Essay

The act of finding my dream job was much simpler than most, when I was in early grade school I wanted to be a professional baseball player. This remained true until my later middle school days when I met my algebra teacher, he explained to me that I excelled in math and problem-solving. This is when I first heard about engineering, he explained to me how engineers are the problem solvers of the world and it may be a good fit for me. This opened up my eyes to having a career not in the professional sports world for the first time. This changed my academic path for the next years, once I entered high school I gained the freedom of selecting electives. While most of my friends chose the same easy classes I put myself into the engineering I course. This was an extremely fun and rewarding class as it was difficult at times but showed me I was right where I belonged. This led to me taking Engineering II the following year, this class was extremely challenging compared to the previous year but rewarding as well. My teacher and I grew a good relationship where I would do some extra work and even other projects on the side. I enjoyed the AutoCad software we were using for 3D design assignments, we even would 3D print necessary maintenance issues around the classroom. During this course I had a new professor who showed me the technological side of engineering, I learned how to wire, code, and network certain systems. This became very important as I finished the engineering electives and still had two years remaining, my teacher also taught Principals of Technology one and two. Of course, I took both of these courses as they piqued my interest in technological work and engineering. These two courses showed me the importance of technology in today's world, as everything we have is based on technology. I also learned how to properly work in a team to problem solve, this was very difficult at first because it felt like personalities and egos were colliding at times. After overcoming these small issues I found that engineering and technology were my true passions in life.

I graduated from high school and went to the Virginia Military Institute to pursue civil engineering and baseball. I found out at VMI that engineering was much more difficult than I imagined, I stayed motivated and pushed through early difficult classes and labs. These labs were extremely fun as they finally were specific to what I wanted to do. My favorite lab was the concrete lab, this is where we studied the different concrete possibilities and saw how each one had different strengths and weaknesses. Unfortunately, during this year COVID hit and forced everyone back home, luckily for me my dad continued to work and build fences and decks for friends and past clients. I was able to give him a hand and learn the hands-on portions of construction and problem-solving. This was very interesting and physically demanding, but it showed me how things operated and moved in the real world outside of the classrooms. I soon transferred to Randolph Macon College where I continued my engineering degree. This degree path was much different than VMI’s since it was not civil engineering, this degree was in engineering physics where I gained a much broader understanding of more aspects of different engineering and physics. Similar to VMI, I had many high-level labs that involved very interesting experiments that could translate to the real world. I finally graduated with a degree in engineering physics and graduate transferred to Old Dominion University to continue my baseball career and get a leadership degree as well.

During these last few years of college, I had many part-time job experiences that were not in the engineering field but instead, it was in the restaurant business and landscaping industry. This experience showed me how the hiring process works and how to coordinate with supervisors. Maintaining a consistent job was borderline impossible for me these past few years since I have been playing baseball year-round, but I have just begun the interviewing process for many jobs in my desired field. This field is the technological engineering field, the current position I am interested in is the field service engineer for optometry and radiology companies. This position requires the engineer to be able to travel to machines around the country and fix them on their own. I find this position very interesting since I like working alone and I enjoy working hands-on with technology and computers. My main roadblock is my lack of experience but it seems some companies are willing to put that aside and train me to start a new generation of field service engineers. The job search is very stressful and exciting at the same time. Similar to baseball I am competing against other candidates for a position, these managers have been beneficial to me in finding the perfect fit for my first full-time position. This stressful hunt for the right fit has shown me a few things about job searching. The first one is how important it is to have a good strong resume, this has been my main topic of discussion with interviewers, I try to see what they think I should change in my resume if they are not going to hire me. The second one is having good connections and an easy way to access. These are the problems I have faced so far in my job search, I am hoping to improve my resume and gain connections and an online presence for employers to see and access.

In conclusion, my educational experiences have led me down the path to becoming an engineer. I am very grateful to have the teachers and professors I had throughout my academic career to push me and make me the best student I could be. These courses showed me how interesting and fun engineering can be for a career. I am thrilled with my decision to pursue this career path as I think it fits well with my strengths in life. As my job search continues I hope to better myself professionally, my resume, and my online presence, so I can get hired and behind my career.