

"ask for help and direction"



As a high school senior, Jeff planned to enter the Welding Technician program at his local college in Welland, Ontario. However, he was denied admission due to a missing prerequisite math course. Undeterred, he accepted an offer from Centennial College and completed a Motorcycle and Powersports Product Repair Techniques Certificate, which led to immediate employment after graduation.

Although he enjoyed the hands-on work, the seasonal nature of the job left him seeking something more stable.

Reflecting on an inspiring Engine Systems class discussion on gear design, Jeff began to consider a future in mechanical engineering.

Once again, admission requirements stood in his way: the program required a senior-level math course he hadn't taken. Fortunately, an employee at Niagara College introduced him to the Academic Upgrading (AU) program—and Jeff enrolled to strengthen his math skills.

Jeff progressed quickly, completing both ACE Core and Technical Mathematics within months. Applying to college was smooth and his conditional offer became unconditional as soon as he completed AU.

He was admitted to the Mechanical Engineering Technology program at Niagara College and graduated with an Advanced Diploma. Thanks to a successful co-op placement, he was hired immediately as a Process Engineer. He remained in that role for six years before transitioning to his current position as Preventive Maintenance Coordinator at the same company.

Jeff continues to invest in his professional growth. In December 2024, he completed a Graduate Certificate in Operations Management through Fanshawe College to support his goal of moving into leadership roles.

His advice for others? "Ask for help and direction," he says. "My path could have been very different if I'd had one-on-one guidance back in high school."

— Kathy Keenan, Niagara College